

West over Sea

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The Northern World

North Europe and the Baltic c. 400-1700 AD
Peoples, Economies and Cultures

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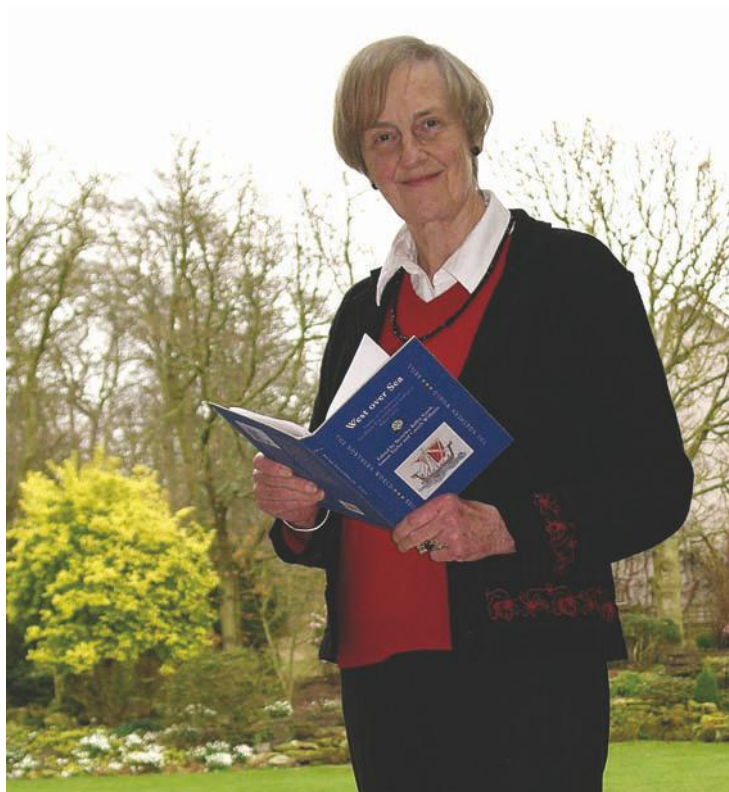
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VOLUME 31



Barbara Crawford

West over Sea

Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and
Settlement Before 1300

A FESTSCHRIFT IN HONOUR OF DR BARBARA E. CRAWFORD

Edited by

Beverley Ballin Smith
Simon Taylor
Gareth Williams



BRILL

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NOTE TO READERS

Kindly note that although Dr Barbara Crawford is the managing editor of the *Northern World* series she was NOT part of the decision-making process with regard to this Festschrift in her honour.

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FOREWORD

It is a privilege and pleasure to introduce this volume of essays presented to my dear friend and former colleague, Barbara Crawford. It was in 1964 that we first met, in St Andrews, where she had recently returned after furthering her interdisciplinary interests by studying archaeology for a year in Cambridge. Her return to the university of her first degree had, of course, not so much been in order to embark upon a PhD under the supervision of Robin Adam on the 'Earls of Orkney and Caithness from 1158 to 1470 as to wed the St Andrews botanist, Robert Crawford. Their household in the then tiny cottage at Kincapple has fostered the happiest of alliances of history and science. Their inspiring enthusiasm, the range of their interests and travels in distant parts (Mediterranean, Nordic, sub-polar or Latin American)—whether to sing or to observe and photograph the landscape, flora and monuments—have made and still make every visit to Kincapple a joyful voyage of discovery. Each stay there is also a gastronomic feast, in which Barbara's culinary expertise enhances the fruits of Bob's garden. The contributors to this volume are among the many who have benefited from the Crawfords' generous hospitality, loyal friendship and inspirational 'Can do' attitude to life, as to scholarship.

Barbara is very much a Yorkshirewoman, with all the direct humour and vigour of that breed. But she is also an honorary Scot, from her university education, her marriage and her residence, and a Scottish historian, whose researches have delighted in showing that Scandinavian Scotland is a subject that must be tackled on many fronts simultaneously. The most remote terrain, the acute problems of the relations of the Norse, Gaelic and English languages, the questionable reliability of memory, oral tradition, poetry or saga, not to mention the controversies of archaeological, architectural or toponymic interpretation—all for her are just challenges to be enjoyed and met. Her history is about real people in real places, and if the people are long dead, the places can indeed be identified and explored today. Her research method has been to seek friends and to develop expertise from leading scholars throughout the North Sea world. Barbara is indeed, in the modern jargon, the sort of formidable networker that every fine topic needs, if productive foundations are to be laid.

Barbara's earliest published work neatly showed how unsatisfactory were received interpretations of the negotiations in 1468–9 for the Scottish crown's acquisition of Shetland. Her doctoral thesis found her tackling a larger topic and a longer time-span but with uneven evidence. Her *Scandinavian Scotland* (1987) therefore set out boldly her beautifully illustrated conception of the wider and inter-disciplinary subject that she made her own. That pioneering and visionary handbook has inspired many and provoked others to fill in the gaps or to seek to emend her interpretations. Her questioning of the written sources and her joy in exploring the landscape had by then already led her to attempt to locate and to begin to excavate the *stofa* on the tiny Shetland island of Papa Stour where Ragnhild Simunsdattir had challenged Earl Thorvald Thoresson's fiscal demands. The regular summer research excavations between 1977 and 1990 at 'Da Biggins' were a triumph of long-distance organisation. Those taking part in, or just visiting, the excavations in that enchanted spot in the long summer daylight had an experience to be treasured. The full report (1999), now so handsomely published by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the Norwegian Academy, conveys both the collaborative spirit with which Barbara imbued the whole project and her determination to see it through to a triumphant conclusion. Over those years Papa Stour inspired her to co-ordinate collaborative investigations into the wider historical and archaeological issues that her researches there raised. So Barbara organised a series of four inspirational one-day seminars in St Andrews in St John's House and subsequently edited them with admirable despatch. Her commitment to Scottish history (especially that of the Northern Isles) and her skills and vigour as an editor were also deployed to wonderful effect in wide-ranging volumes devoted to *Shetland History* (1984), *St Magnus Cathedral and Orkney's Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (1988); *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain* (1999) and in fine 'Festschriften' for Per Sveaas Andersen (1995) and Donald Watt (1999). These volumes, mostly deriving from successful symposia or conferences that she had organised, have been interspersed with a steady flow of articles presenting her latest research findings. That rich stream continues and our appetite has already been whetted by the first papers from her ambitious Europe-wide research project on the cult of St Clement and the nature of its association with Scandinavian urban settlers, wherever they were to be found.

Barbara's wider commitment to all aspects of Scottish history and archaeology has led to outstanding service, both for the Antiquaries of

Scotland and the Royal Commission of the Ancient Monuments of Scotland. Most recently it has found her establishing in St Andrews the Strathmartine Centre, where her custody of the legacy of Ronald Cant has provided a local base for the nurture of Scottish studies. It is entirely fitting that such a generous friend and such a pioneering and public-spirited scholar should herself receive a volume of essays from those indebted to her kindness, her teaching or her scholarly example. *West over Sea* is indeed a testimony to the vigorous health of the subject and the school that Barbara has in large part created. It is presented to her with our love and admiration.

Nicholas Brooks

Birmingham

The feast of St Barbara 2006

PREFACE

Barbara Crawford has made a huge impact on the study of Scandinavian settlement in the British Isles, and especially in Scotland, not just through her own scholarship, but through her constant efforts to promote the subject, and to encourage other scholars. A supportive, though often demanding teacher, she has also been active throughout her career as a facilitator for the research of others; organising conferences; editing volumes of collected papers (as well as acting as editor for the series in which this volume appears); and playing an active role in a number of learned societies and charitable trusts. Although she herself is a settler in Scotland from the Danelaw, her concern and enthusiasm for Scotland's history and heritage have seen a longstanding involvement in the running of the Scottish Treasure Trove system, as well as setting up the Strathmartine Trust to encourage and support the study of Scottish History, through the benefaction of her old friend and mentor Ronald Cant.

Barbara has been a pioneer in promoting an interdisciplinary approach to the history of Scandinavian Scotland. While such approaches have sometimes been viewed askance by more conservative historians, interdisciplinary studies are essential for considering a subject as lacking in traditional historical documentation as Scandinavian Scotland, or indeed, early medieval Scotland. Barbara has sought to combine historical approaches with evidence from other sources, especially archaeology and place-names, to provide a composite picture of Scotland's past. Again, she has done this not only in her own research, but by encouraging dialogue and collaboration between scholars from different disciplines, as well as from different countries. Her role in encouraging academic dialogue between Norway and Scotland in particular is reflected in her Fellowship of the Norwegian Academy, but her academic contacts span the whole of the Northern World.

Barbara's publications are many and varied, but probably the most influential of them all is *Scandinavian Scotland*. It is now twenty years since this work was published, and various ideas expressed in it have been updated or even challenged, not least by Barbara herself. However, even where current thinking has moved on, it has done so by

developing from the foundations laid in *Scandinavian Scotland*, which remains the essential overview of the subject.

This volume is a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *Scandinavian Scotland* and of Barbara Crawford's wider contribution to the subject. It contains 30 papers by colleagues past and present, former students, and above all, friends. The book is divided into four main sections, History and Cultural Contacts; The Church and the Cult of Saints; Archaeology, Material Culture and Settlement; and Place Names and Language, each of which reflects one of Barbara's areas of interest, within the general theme of cultural links between Scandinavia and western Europe (and particularly Scotland) in the Middle Ages. The editors are grateful to all the contributors for participating with such enthusiasm, and for producing their work to tight deadlines; to Marcella Mulder and Tanja Cowall at Brill for their hard work in producing the volume; and to the editors of the Northern World Series (except of course Barbara Crawford!) for their support for the volume. The editors would also like to thank Alicia Correa for offering advice on the very rapid preparation of the index, and Robert Crawford for providing a choice of photographs for the frontispiece. The volume has been produced with the generous financial assistance of the Fargher-Noble Trust, and the Viking Society for Northern Research. Finally, we would like to thank everybody involved for keeping the book secret, and contributing to such a pleasant surprise for Barbara. We hope that they, and Barbara, find the finished volume a fitting tribute to Barbara's achievements.

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COUNTY ABBREVIATIONS (PRE-1975)

ABD Aberdeenshire	LAN Lanarkshire
ANG Angus	MLO Midlothian
ARG Argyll	MOR Moray
AYR Ayrshire	NAI Nairnshire
BNF Banffshire	ORK Orkney
BTE Bute	PEB Peeblesshire
BWK Berwickshire	PER Perthshire
CAI Caithness	RNF Renfrewshire
CLA Clackmannanshire	ROS Ross and Cromarty
DMF Dumfriesshire	ROX Roxburghshire
DNB Dunbartonshire	SHE Shetland
ELO East Lothian	SLK Selkirkshire
FIF Fife	STL Stirlingshire
INV Inverness-shire	SUT Sutherland
KCB Kirkcudbrightshire	WIG Wigtownshire
KCD Kincardineshire	WLO West Lothian
KNR Kinross-shire	

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PART ONE

HISTORY AND CULTURAL CONTACTS

ON READING THE ICELANDIC SAGAS: APPROACHES TO OLD ICELANDIC TEXTS

Paul Bibire

The surviving corpus of Old Icelandic texts is vast. Although Icelandic only constitutes a single dialect of Old Norse, the language of the Vikings, by far the largest volume of written material was produced and preserved in Iceland, including almost all the original prose compositions. The quality of some of this is correspondingly high: seen from a purely literary standpoint, Old Icelandic narrative prose achieved a standard which probably outmatches that of any previously recorded in European literatures, including those of Greek and Latin, and which arguably has not itself been outmatched since.

The Old Icelandic sagas were written primarily in a period of at briefest the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though composition and re-composition continued long thereafter. The term ‘saga’, as used in modern English critical terminology for the texts, and to some extent in the manuscripts of the texts themselves, refers to a narrative text, mostly prose though it often contains poetry, which is more or less complete in terms of the causal structure which constitutes its narrative. Sagas vary greatly in length, but at longest compete with all but the longest modern novels; they may, however, be far shorter than most modern novels, and some only occupy a few printed pages in modern editions. They are often cyclic, and sagas can contain sub-sagas or saga-like sub-structures. The term does not imply any truth-value: the literal meaning of the Norse word *saga* is ‘thing said, recounted’, and it can be translated as both ‘history’ and ‘story’.

Modern scholars divide the corpus of sagas into several ‘genres’. Those most commonly known as the ‘Icelandic sagas’ are the ‘Sagas of Icelanders’ (*Íslendingasögur*),¹ a group of approximately thirty or forty texts, depending on how they are counted. These tell of events

¹ These are sometimes in English also inappropriately called ‘Family Sagas’, a term which has no basis in Icelandic usage and which reflects nothing specific to these texts.

mostly in Iceland for the period from the mid ninth century to the early eleventh: that is, the period of the Settlement of Iceland and its history up to and including the Conversion to Christianity. They deal with the formation of Icelandic society, but not in any general terms: it is depicted entirely in the particular and personal. The history of Iceland is continued in the 'Contemporary Sagas' (*samtíðarsögur*), which recount events from the early twelfth century to just after the middle of the thirteenth century. There is a very abrupt and unexplained break of about a century between the content of the Sagas of Icelanders and that of the Contemporary Sagas: events of most of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth century are not used as the subject-matter of sagas, and are recorded elsewhere, in the Annals, or in isolated historical texts such as *Íslendingabók* and *Hungrvaka*. The 'Kings' Sagas' (*konungasögur*), in contrast, deal with the dynasties of the Norwegian kingdom, from legendary times but entering an apparently 'historical' mode in the mid ninth century, and continuing unbroken up to just after the middle of the thirteenth century. A similar cyclic account of the dynasty of the Earls of Orkney is known as *Orkneyinga saga*, and fragments survive of another corresponding account of the dynasty of the Danish kings, *Danakonunga sögur*.

Personages and events of heroic legend are often cited at the head of genealogical narrative in *Landnámabók* 'The Book of Settlements', which is a geographically-organised annotated catalogue of Icelandic genealogies from the Settlement onward. Legend similarly heads the genealogies of major personages in the Sagas of Icelanders and of the Kings. This body of legend is represented in its own right in the 'Legendary Sagas' (*fornaldarsögur*). These purport to deal with events in a more or less timeless 'Ancient Age' of heroic exploits, loosely set in the latter part of the Germanic Migration Age up to the early Viking period. Some of the legends recounted in the Legendary Sagas are also known from other sources, particularly poetry, and sometimes from other periods and languages, and may be regarded, at least from the Icelanders' perspective, as 'genuine tradition' (whatever that term may conceal). But the Icelanders certainly ran short of actual tradition, and seem to have employed much and fertile fantasy.

From the late twelfth century onwards, Old French romances, and later those of Middle High German and Middle English, reached Scandinavia. A number of them seem to have been translated into Norse prose for King Hákon Hákonarson the Old (reigned 1216–63) of Norway, two of which are associated with the name of a 'Robert'

(‘Brother Robert’, *Saga af Tristram ok Ísönd*; ‘Abbot Robert’, *Elis saga ok Rósamundu*) who supposedly translated them for the king. Although of literary-historical importance, few of these translations have much merit of their own. But the Icelanders took them up with some enthusiasm, and created a distinct new corpus of ‘secondary romance’, using material derived (sometimes at some remove) from their models. The romances are known as Sagas of Chivalry (*riddarasögur*): they survive in large numbers, and many have never yet been published, let alone given much serious study. Other types of saga are Saints’ Lives (*heilagramanna sögur*), which again survive in large numbers, and Sagas of the Icelandic Bishops (*biskupa sögur*); yet other sagas fit ill into any easy categorisation, for instance learned works such as *Trójumanna saga*, *Alexanders saga* or *Gyðinga saga*, based at differing removes upon Dares Phrygius, Walter of Châtillon and Josephus.

There is little direct evidence for genre-distinctions made within the sagas in the medieval period, and almost all the terms used above are modern. However, sagas of like kind are often transmitted together, and sometimes in cyclic form. Most of the Contemporary Sagas survive in a single cycle, *Sturlunga saga*. Similarly the Kings’ Sagas largely survive in a number of related cycles typified by *Heimskringla*. These cycles are reflected in the vast compilations of legendary romances associated with Charlemagne (*Karla-Magnúss saga*) or Theodoric of Bern (*Þiðreks saga*), or of religious sagas associated with the Virgin Mary (*Máriu saga*). Looser associations often imply cyclic organisation within individual manuscripts of other sorts of sagas: legendary sagas, or indeed Sagas of Icelanders, as for instance in *Möðruvallabók*. The study of the manuscript-context of saga-transmission is only now beginning. Other indirect evidence also suggests the reality of some modern distinctions. Thus *riddarasögur* are generally composed using a specific and precisely-defined range of motifs and rules for their composition, and they generally use a specific range of rather ornate styles and vocabulary. The *heilagramanna sögur* are usually almost as stylised in composition, and use a different range of rather ornate and decorative styles and vocabulary. In contrast, *fornaldarsögur* use yet another different but almost as specific range of motifs, if a rather less precise set of rules for composition; contrastingly, however, their vocabulary and style is very stripped-down and bare, even in comparison with the *Íslendingasögur*. The *Íslendingasögur* and *konunga sögur* are not usually distinguished from each other in vocabulary and style, and show considerable variety of construction. It is probably undesirable to see this distribution of styles and constructional techniques simply

in terms of the modern concept of ‘genre’. Rather there were several distinct narrative modes simultaneously available within the medieval saga, and mode-switches are not infrequent within individual texts. Thus *Grettis saga* contains *fornaldarsaga* episodes set within an *Íslendingasaga*, but at its end the scene shifts from Iceland to Byzantium, and the mode shifts to romance and then to religious narrative, with corresponding shifts of motif, style and vocabulary.

Only one major discussion of saga-types survives from the Icelandic Middle Ages. This is the famous and much-discussed account of the saga-entertainment provided at a wedding at Reykjahólar in 1119 in *Porgils saga ok Hafliða*.² Perhaps the most striking aspect of this passage is its discussion of truth-values. It introduces the word *lygisaga* ‘lying saga’, from *lygi* ‘lie’, now often inappropriately understood and used as a genre-term.³ This term may not here be pejorative. However, whether or not either the writer of this passage, or King Sverrir of Norway (d. 1202) to whom the term is here attributed, condemned *lygisögur*, the word certainly need not always be neutral, and could easily be used pejoratively, as is the case with most other compounds in *lygi*-. The compound *lygisaga* is rare, and the dictionaries cite only two examples, the other of which is in *Jómsvíkinga þáttr*.⁴

Jall suarar. huat væit ek segir hann huort menn munu alldri hætta fyrr
lygisogum j landinu en nokkurir hanga uppi fyrir þat.⁵

In this citation the word is glossed by Guðbrandur Vigfússon as ‘lying story, false report’, by Fritzner as ‘usandfærdig Fortælling, falsk

² Ed. U. Brown (Oxford, 1952), pp. 17–8; *Sturlunga saga*, ed. Kr. Kålund (København etc., 1906–11), I, p. 22; ed. Jón Jóhannesson *et al.* (Reykjavík, 1946), I, p. 27. The saga may have reached its present written form soon after 1237, and seems to show a literary relationship with *Sverris saga* apart from the citation of Sverrir in this passage. The position now generally accepted on this passage is probably that best and most fully argued by Peter Foote, in a classic article, ‘Sagnaskemtan: Reykjahólar 1119’, *Saga-Book* XIV:3 (1955–6), pp. 226–39, repr. *Aurvandilstá* (Odense, 1984), pp. 65–76, with a postscript, pp. 76–83). Ralph O’Connor, ‘History or Fiction? Truth-Claims and Defensive Narrators in Icelandic Romance-Sagas’, *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 15 (2005), pp. 101–69, discusses and develops Peter Foote’s arguments, and the analysis here owes much to many constructive discussions with him.

³ For instance by the present writer in ‘From *riddarasaga* to *lygisaga*: the Norse response to romance’, in Régis Boyer, ed., *Les sagas de Chevaliers: Riddarasögur* (Paris, 1982), I, pp. 55–74.

⁴ *Fms* xi 118; Flateyjarbók, ed. Guðbrandur Vigfússon & C. R. Unger (Christiania 1860–8), I 184.33; ed. Sigurður Nordal (Akranes, 1945) I 203.

⁵ ‘The earl answers, “What do I know,” says he, “whether people will never stop false reports in the country, before some hang for it.”’

Beretning': it is extremely pejorative, even treasonable, since it was potentially punishable by hanging.

The passage in *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða* names two sagas and cites two opinions of them. As to the veracity of *Hrómundar saga Gripssonar*, the writer states that King Sverrir had said such *lygisögur* to be the most entertaining, but that *menn* know how to trace their ancestry back to Hrómundr. Equally, after saying that Ingimundr the Priest had performed the saga of Ormr Barreyjarskáld and a lay at its end that he had himself composed, the writer states that *hafa þó margir fróðir menn þessa sögu fyrir satt*.⁶ In both cases authorship-claims seem also to be made: Hrólfr from Skálmarnes had *saman setta* the saga about Hrómundr Gripsson, while Ingimundr the Priest had *ortan* the lay at the end of the saga of Ormr Barreyjarskáld that he performed. Of course any 'authorship' here, in either case, only involves presentation: *saman setja* simply means 'to put together, compile', and cannot mean 'invent, create'; the past participle *ortan* refers to poetic composition, and carries no implication as to the nature of the content. So in both cases, the writer of this passage seems to be extremely careful to avoid commitment as to the 'truth' or 'falsehood' of the texts which he describes. It is accordingly difficult to determine his own opinion, though the fact that he raises doubts may reflect his own doubt.

Of the saga of Ormr Barreyjarskáld little can be said, but a saga survives about Hrómundr Gripsson. This existing saga is usually alleged not to be the saga named here, but that allegation is apparently based on no direct evidence, and only on the belief that the more 'fantastic' *fornaldarsögur* are of late composition, and therefore could not have been in existence by 1119. This belief is itself based upon an evolutionary view of the sagas, that most or all *fornaldarsögur* are degenerate, composed in the 'post-classical' period after the thirteenth-century glories of the Sagas of Icelanders, which in their turn had developed from the Kings' Sagas from the late twelfth century onwards. This linear view has little to recommend it, and in some instances is demonstrably incorrect. Saxo Grammaticus, for instance, clearly had access to *fornaldarsögur* of 'fantastic' content around or soon after 1200, probably before most of the major Sagas of Icelanders were written. Clearly at most stages of saga-composition, various different narrative modes were available simultaneously. If the description of the sagas given here may

⁶ 'yet many learned people take this saga to be true'; *þó* 'yet', v.r. *þá* 'then'.

be trusted, they seem to have been of the more ‘fantastic’ sort despised for their lack of ‘high seriousness’ throughout most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But apparently such sagas, which we usually dismiss as at best playful fantasy, could be accepted by some as ‘true’ in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, and even a careful and apparently sceptical writer does not simply dismiss them as invention. So the more sober and realistic texts, the Sagas of Icelanders and the Kings’ Sagas, should probably be reckoned as intended to be accepted as in some senses ‘true’ by their audiences.

A point largely overlooked in discussion of this passage is that the purpose of these texts was *skemmtun* ‘entertainment’, both at the wedding at Reykjahólar and more widely. King Sverrir notes the entertainment-value of what he calls *lygisögur*, and seems to suggest that this was their only function. Presumably the status of these sagas as *lygi* denied them any more serious purpose in his eyes. For the writer, however, entertainment and veracity seems to be locked together through genealogy: ‘and yet people know how to reckon their genealogies to Hrómundr Gripsson’. *Landnámabók* includes one such genealogy descended from Hrómundr, set in high honour: it is the genealogy of Ingólfr and Hjörleifr, who were the first settlers of Iceland.⁷ It is also apposite to Sverrir’s reported comment. The king was in a particularly appropriate position to appreciate falsified genealogies, since he probably invented his own dynastic claim to the Norwegian throne. To question this openly, during his own reign or those of his descendants including Hákon the Old, would have been treasonable. This comment, therefore, is doubly significant: it casts ambiguous reflections upon the genealogical account of the Settlement of Iceland as given in *Landnámabók*, which Sverrir seems to question, and it may also cast an ironic light upon Sverrir’s own royal status.

Genealogy may be a central link between entertainment and veracity. As mentioned above, many if not most Sagas of Icelanders begin with a section set in *fornaldarsaga* mode, giving a legendary ancestry and status to the characters of the saga, and so to their ultimate descendants, its audience. Thereby legend, with its heroic values, is established as a genealogical starting-point for the personages, the narratives, and the ethical and other patterns that organise the large-scale structures of the sagas. *Ynglinga saga* serves the same functions for the Norwegian royal

⁷ *Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson (Reykjavík, 1968), SH6, pp. 38, 40.

dynasty depicted within *Heimskringla* and similar legendary sections introduce *Danakonunga sögur* and *Orkneyinga saga*; likewise *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks konungs* seems to be intended to function in part as a legendary introduction to the dynastic history of Sweden. For this genealogical organisation to operate, the legendary material must in some sense be accepted by the audience of the saga. Entertainment and acceptance of veracity are not mutually incompatible, and the one may follow from the other.

The truth-values of most Old Icelandic vernacular prose are necessarily associated with the problems of 'fiction' in the sagas, and of the origins of the sagas. 'Fiction', in our own culture, is a difficult and ill-defined concept. It is applied to narrative which is untrue but not intended to deceive, and is therefore not a lie. There is, as it were, a conspiracy between author and audience to suspend disbelief. 'Fiction' requires intentionality: it requires an author to undertake the act of feigning, rather than the alternative acts of telling the truth or of lying, as well, of course, as requiring the audience to accept the act of feigning as such. The author, and therefore the presence of the authorial voice within the text, are necessary but not adequate preconditions of the concept and therefore of the genres which employ it. In English literature, 'fiction' seems to be a concept of recent development. Defoe still has problems with it, and he presents himself as telling true histories in his novels.⁸ The English predecessors of fiction, even such apparently novelistic works as for instance *The Pilgrim's Progress*, are not fiction but for the most part either present inherited narratives, or claim historical truth, or, most importantly, claim allegorical truth. The 'missing link' in the literary history of fiction, probably the Spanish novels of the Golden Age, and above all Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, link the novel back to late medieval romance and subvert that in the process: Quixote is, after all, mad, and his narrative presents romantic delusion rather than mere fiction.

Old Icelandic had no term which can be translated as 'fiction', though it has words translated as 'true' (*sannr* 'true, trustworthy, trusty'), and 'lie' (*lygi* 'deliberate falsehood'). Of these the second seems uncontroversial; the first, *sannr*, certainly includes factual accuracy, but is a

⁸ For instance, Defoe, in an elaborate and apparently serious pseudo-scholarly preface, attempts to present the entirely fictional novel *Moll Flanders* (1722) as factually true but with the names changed. Such a claim had been just about tenable for *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), based upon the actual experiences of Alexander Selkirk.

wider word embracing notions of trust and trustworthiness as well. A narrative that is described as *sannr* must certainly be literally true, but it is also likely to be worthy of trust in other ways as well, most obviously perhaps exemplary. The Icelandic sagas make few overt truth-claims. There is usually no authorial voice to make such a claim, except in a relatively small number of prefaces or postscripts,⁹ and these, apart from the Preface to *Heimskringla* and to the *Separate Saga of St Óláfr*, and that of *Sverris saga*, are mostly attached to romantic sagas which a modern reader instantly classifies as fantasy. Discussion otherwise is largely limited to the famous instance of the sagas performed at the wedding at Reykjahólar in 1119, as described in *Porgils saga ok Hafliða* and discussed above.

Arguably, however, the 'declarative mode' of saga-narrative makes a general and implicit truth-claim. A saga usually simply states that 'X was so', or 'X happened', with little or no qualification. Sometimes subjective reactions are qualified in statements such as 'People said that X seemed to be Y', but the primary narrative mode is still usually declarative, with the subjective comment subordinated to a primary statement of 'fact'. Certainly the saga-reader usually experiences the apparently simple and direct exposure to narrative 'facts', without any awareness of an interposing narrator whose own attitudes, knowledge and truthfulness could be questioned. This largely constitutes the 'absence of the author' already noted. Most of the Sagas of Icelanders and Kings' Sagas thereby demand primary belief in their veracity, at least during the experience of reading.

Modern critical readers often apply the category 'fiction' to most sagas, with the exception of some of the kings' sagas, and the 'contemporary sagas' (*samtíðarsögur*) dealing with events of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (a distinction based on very uncertain grounds). This categorisation arises from the work of the so-called 'Icelandic school' of scholarship, which presented an attempt to explain the origin of the sagas. It was established in the first third or so of the twentieth century and has been dominant thereafter. It was founded by scholars such as Björn M. Ólsen, and supported by the work of scholars such as Sigurður Nordal, Einar Ólafur Sveinsson and Jónas Kristjánsson. These scholars recognised that the realism of the sagas was a product

⁹ Discussed by Sverrir Tómasson, *Formálar íslenskra sagnaritara á miðöldum* (Reykjavík, 1988).

of literary skill; they therefore propounded the view, sometimes called the Book-Prose Theory, that the major sagas were works of literary creation by literary authors, produced from the late twelfth century onwards into the early fourteenth century, and were based on little, sometimes on no, pre-existing textual or traditional material. These scholars were in their turn reacting against a rather earlier view, that at least the Sagas of Icelanders and the Kings' Sagas were oral compositions made at the time of the events which they described, and that these were orally transmitted verbatim until they were transcribed into writing in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. This view, originally based on a rather naïve acceptance of saga-realism as reality, had developed during the course of the nineteenth century, and was formulated with subtlety, clarity and some passion by scholars such as Knut Liestøl, Andreas Heusler and Finnur Jónsson: it is sometimes called the Free-Prose Theory. The debate, now long since extinct, produced much heat and some light.

In practice proponents of either view were often sensibly pragmatic in discussing individual texts. Sigurður Nordal tried to demonstrate, with some success, that *Hrafnkels saga* is unlikely to be historically accurate, and so considered that the saga was 'fiction', but he also held that much of the content of, say, *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar* was genuine tradition. Equally scholars such as Finnur Jónsson, although they believed that, for instance, *Njáls saga* contained genuine tradition, also acknowledged that it had received much late re-working. An unhappy association between realism and reality has remained current to the present, however, so that texts with 'fantastic' elements are still often regarded as degenerate. So a saga which contains dragons or trolls is still usually considered less meritorious than one without, dependent entirely on a modern, arbitrary and anachronistic world-view which defines what shall occur in the 'real world' and in its depiction, and what can and should not. *Grettis saga* alone of the major Sagas of Icelanders seems to escape these logical-positivist prejudices, and that apparently by sheer literary power.

Both the Free-Prose and Book-Prose theories were based on a number of assumptions and had strong underlying motivations. Both were fundamentally romantic: proponents of the Free-Prose theory wished to see the sagas as an unclouded window into the noble and heroic past that defined the Scandinavian peoples, and in particular the Icelanders, while adherents of the Book-Prose theory wished to celebrate the cultural achievement of the Icelandic Commonwealth. Neither should be seen

as intentional ‘conspiracy’, as Jesse Byock has argued of the Icelandic School: all scholarship is both constrained and driven by the motivation of the scholars who work within it. Both views have much to their merit, and allow differing appreciations of the texts themselves. For skaldic poetry, and for much of the surviving medieval Scandinavian law-codes, views equivalent to that of the Free-Prose theory are still widely current. Most scholars still, on balance, believe that most earlier skaldic poetry was memorised and transmitted more or less intact until it was written down by scholar-antiquarians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Equally, the early law-codes, such as the Commonwealth Grágás, are still often believed to contain much early material transmitted more or less verbatim over several centuries until written down, at least in part, at the house of Haflíði Másson (one of the protagonists of *Þorgils saga ok Haflíða*) in the winter of 1117–18, according to *Íslendingabók*. If so, memorial transmission of other oral texts may also be far from impossible, and in some instances may be probable. Meanwhile the Book-Prose theory emphasises the High Medieval aspects of the sagas, and their many important relationships with continental European literatures, particularly romance. In particular, the Book-Prose theory specifically allows for ‘fiction’ in ways comparable with those of the modern novel: it allows for an author, and hence for authorial invention, as Nordal attempted to demonstrate for *Hrafnkels saga*.¹⁰ But of course, as Óskar Halldórsson subsequently pointed out,¹¹ thirteenth-century authorial invention is not the only possible explanation here: the saga might well be based on earlier tradition which happened to be historically incorrect, or at least to differ from other ‘historical’ tradition, or indeed on a fully-formed ‘oral saga’ which happened, for whatever reason, to be incorrect or to differ. And since such ‘oral sagas’, if they ever existed, must themselves have been composed, authorial invention is as possible in them as in written texts of the thirteenth centuries.

A view of the Icelandic sagas simply as being or containing ‘fiction’ runs into serious problems. From such truth-claims as are made in or associated with the texts, it is clear that if even ‘fantastic’ sagas were or could be taken as ‘true’, then the sober and realistic Sagas of Icelanders or Kings’ Sagas must then have been generally accepted, not as ‘fic-

¹⁰ Sigurður Nordal, *Hrafnkatla*, Studia Islandica 7 (Reykjavík, 1940); *Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða: A study by Sigurður Nordal*, tr. R. G. Thomas (Cardiff, 1958) with useful notes.

¹¹ Óskar Halldórsson, *Uppruni og þema Hrafnkels sögu* (Reykjavík, 1976).

tion' but as 'true'. It is not plausible that, for several centuries within medieval Iceland, there was one group of people, the saga-authors, who knew that what they were writing was invention, and another group, the audiences, who believed that the sagas were true. Even modern journalism has not achieved that. Even allowing for all the stages of partial acceptance between belief and disbelief, acceptance and rejection, such a conspiracy of authors against their audiences is not a viable hypothesis. This could only work within a sharply divided and hierarchical society, such as those set up by mystery religions, and exemplified in our own culture by medicine and some of the 'hard sciences'.

To address this difficulty, M. I. Steblin-Kamenskij argued for a notion of 'syncretic truth', rather ill-defined, but wider than that of 'truth' in modern English.¹² This is very likely: if the concept of 'fiction' was unavailable, then the concepts of 'truth', and probably also of 'falsehood', were probably wider, to occupy the semantic space which is now divided between the three concepts of 'truth', 'fiction', and 'falsehood'.

For ideological reasons of his own, Steblin-Kamenskij was unwilling to explore some of the possible ranges of 'truth' and 'falsehood' for medieval Icelandic culture, despite a chapter suggestively entitled 'What is Truth?'. There is of course the absolute semantic opposition between immediate literal truth, which can be instantly verified by an audience on the basis of immediate shared sensory experience, and immediate literal falsehood, which can be instantly rejected by an audience on the same basis. Beyond these, of course, are cultural truths and falsehoods. These are transmitted largely by narrative and include, among other matters, 'historical truth'. These are evaluated according to beliefs and attitudes shared in common by author and audience: for instance, we all believe that the First World War took place, and that it was not a Good Thing. These 'truths' are now culturally transmitted and for most of us are no longer directly verifiable through immediate experience: at best we can only try to verify the cultural artefacts through which they are transmitted. They contrast with those expressions which are intended to deceive, and which are therefore lies because they are intended to set up falsehoods for their audiences. These may be of differing degrees of falsehood according to whether their actual content

¹² In *The Saga Mind*, tr. K. H. Ober (Odense, 1973).

is 'true' or 'false' judged by other criteria. At this stage the essential aspect of the truth-claim is intentionality.

Beyond these there are for instance 'allegorical truths' (and for that matter 'allegorical falsehoods'), narrative material intended to be true or false at levels other than the literal: fable, parable, allegory. These are not human universals but are specific to given cultures. They have their own literary history, from the Greek and Sanskrit fables of around the fourth century BC, much developed and extended through the Parables of Christ, and becoming fully-developed allegory as defined by Augustine. They lead ultimately to our own ill-defined but imperative need to interpret narrative, to 'draw a moral'. The 'allegorical frame of mind' seems to have spread with Christianity, and to have reached north-western Europe at Conversion: it seems to be as absent in *Hávamál* as it is in Homer. It permits our modern concept of 'fiction', because it permits acceptance of a narrative which is not intended nor taken as literally true, but which still conveys 'meaning' of some other sort, no matter how ill-defined that may be. Again intentionality is of the essence.

In short, we need not, and perhaps must not, assume that the modern concepts of 'truth' and 'fiction' are the same in other cultures or at other periods, or that 'truth' is bounded at the same points. Further, we must assume that truth-claims, as well as 'fictionality', beyond immediate literal truth, imply personal intention. In the case of a literary narrative, they imply the intention of an author.

Another modern term often used in the study of sagas, but certainly anachronistically so, is 'literature'. This modern critical term is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* s.v. as 'a more restricted sense, applied to writing which has claim to consideration on the ground of beauty of form or emotional effect', and its earliest citation for that sense is from 1812, though citations which show a clear distinction between 'literature' and scientific or historical writing do not appear until much later in the nineteenth century (Emerson, in a publication of 1856).¹³ There is no terminology in Old Norse which can be translated as 'literature' or 'literary' in this sense, and no evidence for any Old Icelandic prose texts being distinguished from any others on this basis. The modern

¹³ The increasingly restricted sense of the word 'literature' in the nineteenth century is discussed by Ralph O'Connor, 'The poetics of earth science: "Romanticism" and the two cultures', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 36 (2005), pp. 607–617, especially pp. 611–13.

distinction between 'literature' and 'history' is irrelevant to the study of Norse.

The modern concept of 'history', and its modern distinction from 'story', is quite as problematic as that of 'fiction', and rather less obvious. 'History' has its own complex history; its development from earlier models is here sketched partially and with prejudice. Some classical Greek and Roman writers, and their medieval successors, sometimes seem to modern readers to write what we perceive as 'history'. Its dominant means of transmission from the classical period into the medieval Christian world, and so to early modern historians, was Biblical; it was in particular the narrative mode of Luke's Gospel and *Acts of the Apostles*. This was invariably personal history: that of specific, named individuals who interact with each other to produce the causal action which forms the narrative. One of these persons, from the Bible onwards, is always God. Bede, therefore, can write his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* in terms of the teleological working-out of God's will, through specific individuals, amongst the English. Historiography, therefore, is driven by intentionality: the perceived will of God, or the perceived logical imperative of the drive to nationhood, or to empire, or to democracy or the Rule of the Masses or whatever. The working-out of this intentionality is always narrative: presentation of a causal chain of events leading teleologically to its inevitable objective. As 'history' develops from the seventeenth century onwards in English, so it diverges from other narrative forms, in particular from personal history. This divergence necessitated changes in terminology. Firstly the two words 'history' and 'story', which were previously more and less formal derivations from Latin *historia*, came to be distinguished in sense. 'History' acquired or retained a claim to veracity which has been increasingly lacking from 'story'. To judge from the citations in the *OED* s.v. *story*, the two forms ceased to be semantically equivalent during the course of the eighteenth century. At around the same time, a new word was created for personal history, 'biography', first attested in English in 1683. As 'history' loses or demotes a sense of personal history, it substitutes constructs of differing sorts for the person. These constructs may be anything from nation-states or the Church, to slave-trade or science. It thereby gains the further advantage that most of these constructs have no verifiable objective existence other than in their imagined being. A social institution, a nation or a church, does not exist unless it is believed to exist, preferably by its own adherents. Slavery does not exist in a culture which has no concept of 'freedom'.

Science does not exist unless it can be distinguished, say, from magic or religion or philosophy—or from ‘common sense’. In short, ‘history’, once it abandoned biography, deals with the communal ‘fictions’ of our shared inventions.

The conclusions to be drawn from this discussion are that the modern critical terminology of ‘fiction’, ‘literature’ and ‘history’ are inapplicable to Old Icelandic sagas: it is anachronistically inappropriate to ask whether a saga is a literary or a historical work.

How then should modern scholars read the sagas? We cannot read medieval Icelandic sagas as if we were medieval Icelanders, because we are not. We cannot abandon our own framework of understanding, no matter how hard we try to re-create past understanding. Nor should we: a literary scholar can still read the sagas in order to understand and appreciate the skill of their composition and the aesthetic achievement so reached. Meanwhile a historian can still read them in order to try to find out what they say about the past, their ‘factual content’, in a quest for ‘historical truth’. But both must be aware of the inadequacy of their approaches. Literary analysis neglects the value and meaning of saga-content, but it is that very content which often eludes the historian.

The meaning of saga-content, not merely its veracity but its significance for its audiences past and present, intended and unintended, gives the text a power that it could not otherwise possess. Meaning, of course, is a two-way process: it involves the intentionality of the text, but it also involves the ways in which an audience can react to the text, and different audiences can react differently. Modern readers bring their own modern sensibilities and their own modern preconceptions to the text. These can to some extent be subtracted, in order to perceive intended meaning, though such unweaving of intention and reception is subtle and often ambiguous. Scholars of the Free Prose or Book Prose schools, motivated by their own romantic nationalism, gave the sagas a significance that still has some power. Such readings of the sagas are now, however, sufficiently removed from current scholarship for us to be able to see them from the outside and accordingly, perhaps, allow for them. It is more difficult to perceive and make provision for our own preconceptions.

The intended meaning of a text, too, must primarily be attributed to its immediate production: the intention of a performer, and the intended effect of his performance upon a known and specific audience. Each medieval manuscript of most sagas usually gives its own text of that

saga. It can therefore be seen as such an individual 'performance', created and preserved in writing but almost certainly intended primarily for oral delivery, adjusted in presentation and sometimes content to fit individual circumstances of creation and performance. Behind these individual 'manuscript performances' may lie a more or less irrecoverable 'author' and authorial version of the text, though perception of any such author and recovery of any authorial text are in most cases probably mirages of the textual critic's imagination. But beyond any such more or less imaginary textual idealisations there lies the possibility, in some instances the probability, of older tradition, of whatever form and in whatever medium, underlying the text. This underlying tradition too will have had meanings for those who had transmitted it, as well as for those who then incorporated it into their texts. There is thus a depth of time, a chronological perspective, to the reading of the text: a self-conscious awareness, often overtly presented as such within the text, of multiple layers of meaning that recede into the past.

A saga, therefore, is direct and immediate evidence for how individuals of (perhaps) the thirteenth or fourteenth century viewed the past: what they thought had happened, or might have happened, or should have happened. But it can also contain evidence from much earlier, whether direct or indirect, with or without later interpretation, for how people of (perhaps) the twelfth or tenth century viewed the past. All this is self-evident in the case, for instance, of the skaldic poetry often incorporated into sagas, if this poetry is considered to be genuinely older than the saga which transmits it. But this principle needs to be applied much more widely to the content of the sagas. Even when a saga seems to create a spurious illusion of pre-existent tradition, that itself may be historically significant: the creation of a tradition that should have existed even if it had not.

This chronological stratification of meaning within the sagas is reflected in the structural and stylistic feature, discussed above, that many of the *konungasögur* and *Íslendingasögur* open with a legendary section in *fornaldarsaga* mode, set in the Viking or even pre-Viking period. This section establishes the subsequent genealogies of major characters, and usually also sets up narrative and ethical patterns which are to be cyclically worked out in later parts of the text. It is the structural expression within the saga of its earliest layer of meaning, no matter whether that chronological layering is actual or illusory.

The 'meaning' of saga-content, therefore, is presented through layered receding reflections of the past. We see in the text itself not

only our own and its own perceptions of the past, but the diminishing reflections of perception from previous periods. These are only perceptions of the past, not that past itself: they are cultural artefacts that reflect the past. But then that is true of all history of all periods at all periods, not least our own.

BECOMING SCOTTISH IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY: THE EVIDENCE OF THE CHRONICLE OF MELROSE

Dauvit Broun

The standard answer to the question of how Scotland expanded into the country we know today is to give an account of when each part finally and definitively was incorporated into the Scottish kingdom. According to this view, the only acquisition in the thirteenth century was when, on 2 July 1266 at Perth, a treaty was formally agreed between Alexander III in person and the envoys of Magnús VI whereby King Magnús 'granted, resigned and quit-claimed ... for himself and his heirs for ever, Mann with the rest of the Sudreys and all other islands on the west and south of the great sea ... to be held, had and possessed by the said lord Alexander III, king of Scots, and his heirs ...' (*APS* i, 420; Donaldson 1974, 34–6). A very different answer, however, is given if the question of 'becoming Scottish' is determined by when the inhabitants of various parts of the Scottish realm began to regard themselves as Scots. Of course, the kind of evidence which might allow a proper investigation of this development does not exist for the thirteenth century. There is one source, however, the *Chronicle of Melrose*, which sheds a uniquely significant glimmer of light on how some (at least) of the king's subjects in this period regarded 'Scotland' and 'Scots'. What this reveals is that, until the thirteenth century, people like the monks of Melrose in the South-East viewed themselves as English, and that, for them, becoming Scottish was a gradual process that was not certainly 'complete' until a generation after the Treaty of Perth.

Although the *Chronicle of Melrose* does not, of course, offer any evidence about when Hebrideans began to think of themselves as Scottish, it does offer a new perspective on the broader issue. Generations of obedience to the king of Scots did not make 'becoming Scottish' inevitable, and neither was it an essential prerequisite. The evidence of the *Chronicle of Melrose* points, instead, to something else as the key to the growth of Scottish identity in the thirteenth century. The vital ingredient was a significant change in the nature of the relationship between king and subjects, a change which could, in theory, by the time of Alexander III's death in 1286, have had the effect of making

it meaningful for anyone to become Scottish if they did not already identify themselves as such, regardless of whether they belonged to a region which had acknowledged the authority of kings of Scots for twenty years or two-hundred years. Although some of the Chronicle of Melrose's evidence for this transition to Scottish identity has been remarked on before (Broun 1998, 4, 7, 9; Broun 1999, 141–2), the discussion which follows is both the fullest account of this aspect of the chronicle, and the first to benefit from the analysis of scribes and the stratigraphy of the chronicle's development which has been prepared for a new edition.¹ Barbara Crawford's encouragement and support for the new edition has been vital for its progress, which makes it especially appropriate that this first glimpse of its fruits should appear in this volume. It also goes without saying that the example of Englishmen becoming Scottish provided by the chroniclers of Melrose is particularly apposite for someone like Barbara, an Englishwoman who has become, in every way, a Scottish historian.

Like the Western Isles, the lower reaches of the Tweed and Teviot were a region which had been culturally distinct from the kingdom's historic core north of the Forth. When Gaelic reached its greatest extent on the mainland (probably in the mid-eleventh to mid-twelfth centuries), much of the Western Isles was predominantly Norse, while the South-East remained largely English. Socially, too, each region was distinctive: the West with its galleys and seafaring lords, the South-East with its nucleated settlements akin to villages in England and so untypical of Scotland as a whole. As far as the experience of Scottish royal government was concerned, however, the South-East was as different from the Isles as it was possible to be. Not only was Melrose in an area that had acknowledged the authority of kings of Scots for at least two centuries before 1266, but it was within Roxburghshire, which seems to have had one of the earliest attested sheriffs before David I became king in 1124. The Western Isles, in contrast, was the last region to be 'shired', when the short-lived sheriffdoms of Skye, Lorn and Kintyre were established by act of parliament in 1293 (*APS* i, 447). It would be a mistake,

¹ Dauvit Broun and Julian Harrison (eds), *The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey: a Stratigraphic Edition*, vol. i, *Introduction and Facsimile Edition*, is due to be published soon by Boydell and Brewer for the Scottish History Society. This is the source of all the information relating to the chronicle cited in this article.

however, to assume from this that the inhabitants of Melrose and its environs had regarded themselves for generations before Alexander III's reign as Scots living in Scotland. In *De Situ Albanie* (which *may* have been written in Melrose sometime in or between 1165 and 1184) we are told baldly that the Firth of Forth 'divides the kingdoms of the Scots and the English' (Anderson 1980, 242; Howlett 2000, 135, 138).² A more subtle expression of the enduring Englishness of the region is provided by Adam, prior of Dryburgh Abbey (near Melrose), who described himself as living 'in the land of England and the kingdom of the Scots' (Adam of Dryburgh, *De tripartito tabernaculo*: PL cxcviii, cols 609–792, at 723). This was in a work finished in 1180 in which he also explained how William the Conqueror had seized the English throne, and in which he detailed the descent of William king of Scots from the line of Alfred the Great through St Margaret. If the kings of Scots, far from being viewed as foreigners by inhabitants of this region, were cherished as at least as English as the reigning king of England, then allegiance to the king of Scots of itself would hardly have made people like Prior Adam of Dryburgh abandon their English identity and become Scottish. Nevertheless, as we will see, within a generation after 1266, people very like Adam had demonstrably begun to think of themselves and others like them as Scots.

Unfortunately the quality and quantity of data needed to understand this change fully is unattainable. The best that can be managed is to sketch some salient points using the aforementioned chronicle of the Cistercian abbey of Melrose in Roxburghshire. It can only provide direct evidence for the viewpoint of monks of Melrose, of course, and presumably only represents an official record, which was not always the only version of events. Also, Melrose was more than just a local institution: it had lands across southern Scotland and close connections with England and the Continent. There is evidence for monks originating as far afield as Perth, the Lennox and Yorkshire as well as locally. The chronicle does have two important qualities, though. First, it was written contemporaneously in fits and starts for over a century after it was first created in 1173 or 1174, so it has the capacity to reveal, if only sporadically, the perspectives of monks of Melrose throughout

² I am no longer sure that the dating 1202×14 is so compelling (*pace* Broun 2000, 26–7, and references cited there). For 1165×84, see Anderson 1980, 140.

the period of greatest interest. Second, the fact that it can offer direct access only to the way monks of Melrose saw their world at least allows a limited degree of consistency to be achieved.

The life of a contemporary chronicle over a long period can, however, be exceptionally complex. A detailed understanding of this is obviously necessary if it is to be used effectively as a source. But in most cases (where a chronicle survives only in one or more copies) the techniques of textual criticism can only get us so far in disentangling where and when any particular passage was written. A complete grasp of the text's genesis is, in truth, impossible to achieve without being able to see where each scribe has added chunks of text or interpolated material. This kind of information is usually only available to a very limited extent, because most manuscripts of chronicles are predominantly copies of an earlier chronicle, and (of course) as soon as a copy is made, all the crucial evidence for layers of scribal activity that went into producing the text is lost.

In one respect the Chronicle of Melrose is like any other, in that it began life in 1173 $\times$ 4 as a copy of one or more earlier chronicles: at this stage it consisted of Hugh of St Victor's chronicle followed by annals from the first year of Our Lord up to the martyrdom of Thomas Becket on 29 December 1170. What makes it truly remarkable is that it survives as an original manuscript that has been added to over more than a century by 46 scribes who definitely worked at Melrose.³ The last annalistic material written at Melrose can be dated to sometime after Easter 1286 and probably before June 1291. Noel Denholm-Young was surely justified in describing the manuscript as 'something of a freak' (Denholm-Young 1936, 129). Of the chronicle's 119 folios counted by a monk at Melrose before it was borrowed by the abbot of Dundrennan, probably around 1290, 52 folios had been added over the previous century. A complete analysis of the palaeographical and codicological evidence means that it is possible to identify the layers or strata in which text has been entered into the chronicle, either 'lineally', as it were (with one block succeeding another in due chronological order), or by expanding it 'laterally' (by inserting material into existing text: more than a-hundred items have been added into earlier annals). There are about fifty strata overall which can be placed in a relative

³ Not including scribes 1-7 (who worked on the original chronicle, 1173 $\times$ 4), 50 (Dundrennan), 52 (Deeping/Thorney), the scribe of fo. 38^r, and scribes of notes only.

chronology with terminal dates, which means that every passage can be placed in context and dated at least approximately.

The chronicle's evidence for the Scottishness or otherwise of the monks can be said to fall into two categories: first, there are incidental references to Scotland and Scots; second, there are occasions where a deliberate decision has been taken about the chronicle's content from which the chronicler's attitude to Scotland or England can be inferred. Evidence of both kinds can be found in the work of one of the chief scribes who produced the original chronicle in 1173 × 4: I have dubbed him 'Scribe 5'. In the opening sentence of the second of his two stints Bede is referred to as 'the honour and glory of our people'. This, as far as it is known, is original to the Chronicle of Melrose: whoever wrote it plainly regarded themselves as English. The chronicle's Englishness is also reflected by the fact that it belongs to a family of northern English texts: in the section from 731 to Becket's martyrdom it is largely an abbreviated version of a chronicle of the early twelfth century cognate with *Historia Regum* and *Historia post Bedam*. No attempt was made at this stage to include additional material on Scottish history. Was the choice of source, however, based more on convenience than anything else? Ideally we need evidence that some effort went into the chronicle's design, and in this respect Scribe 5 is outstanding. Now, it might be expected that scribes simply copied text which had been prepared for them in advance: their skill was with the pen, and not necessarily in drafting text. It is clear, however, that scribes at Melrose in 1173 × 4 had the opportunity to be much more than mere copyists. The scribe responsible for 956–1016, for example, alone added a series of notices of popes (and the odd dominical letter). Scribe 5, who produced the material from 731 to 956, was head-and-shoulders above the others, though. Only in his section has the abbreviation of the northern chronicle been blended with Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. This is an impressive achievement, and must reflect not only Scribe 5's skill, but also his idea of what the chronicle should be like. The net effect is that the chronicle contains information about other parts of England, and not just the north. Do we therefore have, in Scribe 5, a monk of Melrose who wanted his monastery to have a truly English chronicle, and not just a Northumbrian one? Unfortunately it is difficult to answer 'yes' unequivocally, because Scribe 5, in his other stint in the chronicle spanning the years 1–249, employed exactly the same technique of blending two principal sources. Maybe he should be seen first-and-foremost as a skilled chronicler rather than anything else. It

may be worth pointing out that his script seems a bit more old-fashioned than that of his colleagues: it is notable that he alone used ‘tailed *e*’ and thorn. It may not be too fanciful to imagine, therefore, that he was the most experienced as well as the most skilled member of the team engaged in creating the chronicle in 1173 × 4.

Turning now to the remainder of the chronicle, updated irregularly in many stages over the next 115 years or so, we look in vain for clear-cut references to the monks of Melrose as Englishmen. There are a few incidental indications, however, that they at least did not consider themselves to be Scots until towards the end of the chronicle’s active life. At one level there are references to Scots as a distinct group which, in context, is regarded as extraneous to Melrose and its locality. In 1258, for example, we are told that ‘Scots and Galwegians, who were in the army [which had assembled at Roxburgh], returning home unhappily, pillaged the country in many ways’.⁴ Later in the same annal, when Alexander III reassembled his army in September in Roxburghshire, it is reported that ‘the Scots and Galwegians devastated almost the whole of that country’.⁵ This was probably entered into the chronicle sometime in the following year. At a deeper level, however, Scots were presented not only as different and badly behaved, but as acting outside the norms of Christian society: in the first muster of 1258, it is claimed that they and Galwegians even ate meat on Good Friday. Did this really happen, or was it inspired by the well worn stereotype of Gaelic-speakers as sacrilegious savages, fuelled by an understandable hostility to people who had pillaged Melrose’s lands at harvest-time? It would not be the only occasion in which the chronicle betrays a rather prejudiced view of what was regarded at Melrose as typical Scottish behaviour. This can be detected in its description of events in Galloway following the suppression of a revolt there in 1235, where it is recounted that Scots (almost certainly infantry levies from Menteith) killed the prior and sacrist of the recently founded abbey of Tongland (*Chron. Melrose*, 84; *ES* ii, 497). This was entered into the chronicle no earlier than 1240. The chronicler did not, however, rest satisfied with these terrible crimes, but

⁴ ...*Scoti et Galwithienses qui in exercitu fuerunt...infeliciter ad propria reuertentes patriam in multis expoliauerrunt: Chron. Melrose*, 115; *ES* ii, 591. Perhaps they returned ‘unhappily’ because hopes of gaining plunder from across the border were frustrated when the invasion failed to materialise.

⁵ ...*et Scoti et Galwithienses fere totam patriam illam depopulati sunt: Chron. Melrose*, 116; *ES* ii, 593.

introduced them with a description of a particularly heinous incident repeated almost verbatim from an earlier record of atrocities noted in the chronicle in 1216. In both 1216 and 1235 we are told that ‘some Scots, not masters of knighthood but servants of wickedness’ acted ‘with so wicked and infamous madness that they even denuded a monk of the frock he was wearing, who had, at the point of death, been placed in the infirmary and laid upon a hair-cloth’ (*Chron. Melrose*, 63, 84; *ES* ii, 407–8 and 497).⁶ Plainly this has been copied from the annal for 1216 by whoever drafted the annal for 1235 at least five years after the event. In the original telling of this dreadful deed in 1216, moreover, the perpetrators were soon struck down by God’s vengeance when 1,900 Scots were drowned in the river Eden, whereas all that was found to say about divine retribution in 1235, apart from the execution of a solitary murderer, was that ‘many of that wicked army perished’ when it came to ‘a certain water’—a manifestly unconvincing echo of the account of 1216. It appears, then, that the report of the violent deaths of a prior and sacristan in 1235 was the spur to write even more shocking details about Scottish ungodliness because denuding dying monks of their frocks was seen as just the kind of ghastly thing rampaging Scots would have done. In the chronicler’s defence it might be said that he was simply creating a specimen example to stand for the many acts of cruelty which must have gone unreported. What is noteworthy is his determination to enhance the limited information he had in order to leave a vivid record of Scottish depravity. There is a possibility that all that really happened was that a small gang raided Tongland and killed its prior and sacristan, and that the chronicler, in his enthusiasm for associating Scots with atrocities, has blown this up into an episode of abominable crime waged by a wicked army.

The only instance of a monk of Melrose being identified as a Scot is in the annal for 1266. The example is particularly illuminating because the monk’s name suggests that he was local in origin. If he was regarded as a Scot, then presumably anyone else in Roxburghshire could be, too. The monk concerned was Reginald of Roxburgh who, according to the chronicle, went to Norway and single-handedly negotiated the agreement with the king of Norway and his magnates which saw Mann and

⁶ The similarity of the two passages was pointed out by A. O. Anderson (*ES* ii, 497, nn. 2 & 3), and by Croft Dickinson in *Chron. Melrose*, 248 (where it is observed that ‘probably all this account [in 1235] is artificial’).

the Isles ceded to the king of Scots. Reginald's triumphant return to Scotland is marked by the comment that 'indeed, none of the sons of the Scots, except the aforesaid monk, has ever been able to accomplish this mission'.⁷ 'Sons of Scots' is a rather verbose way of saying 'Scots', but it is of a piece with the overblown manner in which Reginald is described elsewhere in this episode. Now, it will be recalled that, in the annals for 1258, Scots were referred to not only as foreign to the locality, but as not at all the kind of people with which any reputable Christian, let alone a monk, would wish to be associated. Before we get too excited about how swiftly a change in attitude to Scottishness may have occurred between 1258 and 1266, however, it is important to note that the annal for 1266 belongs to a sizeable stratum of material that was not entered into the chronicle until sometime after Easter 1286—that is, approximately a generation after the annal for 1258 was entered (probably in 1259). Whoever drafted the annal for 1266 may, of course, have had some contemporary notes or rough drafts to hand. The fact that the reference to Reginald as a Scot occurs in a piece of heightened prose, however, makes it more likely to belong to the final drafting of this material.⁸

The stratum entered in or soon after Easter 1286 largely consists of the unique copy of a work on Simon de Montfort which is referred to in the chronicle itself as the *Opusculum de nobili Simone de Monte forti*. The Andersons found a number of indications that it was probably written by the editor in charge of this section of the chronicle. Here we find the only other reference to someone as a Scot who might otherwise have been considered an Englishman. The individual concerned was Guy de Balliol, Simon de Montfort's standard-bearer at the fatal battle of Evesham. In the *opusculum* we are told that Guy, 'a most zealous knight, by nation a Scot' (*miles acerrimus natione Scotus*), could have saved himself, but opted instead to fight 'for justice in England' (*pro iusticia Anglie*), and fell with his comrades (*Chron. Melrose*, 131; *ES* ii, 652). The only known direct connection between Guy himself and Melrose is his appearance as a witness in a royal charter in Melrose's favour at Selkirk on 9 December 1264 (*Melrose Liber* i, no. 310). In the months before his death he is found as one of four messengers sent by Alexander III

⁷ *Quod quidem nuncium nullus unquam ex filiis Scottorum potuit procurare preter monachum predictum: Chron. Melrose*, 129; *ES* ii, 654.

⁸ If so, it makes an interesting contrast to the way the atrocity at Tongland was written up in or after 1240.

to Henry III at Hereford (*CDS* i, no. 2381). Unfortunately Balliols are found in various parts of Scotland and beyond: which branch did Guy belong to? There is a vital clue in the *opusculum*, where we are told that Guy's companion (*socius*), who died with him, was Roger of Rule.⁹ Rule is next door to Cavers, the caput of a family of Balliols who included Henry, twice Alexander II's chamberlain, whose body was taken from Roxburgh to Melrose for burial in 1246, followed next year by the body of his son, Adam.¹⁰ There is good reason to suppose, therefore, that Guy belonged to this important Roxburghshire family that had close ties to Melrose itself.

One curious aspect of the negative view of Scots found in the annals for 1235 and 1258 is that, from 1215 at least, the chroniclers appear nonetheless to have regarded Melrose as part of 'Scotland' (*Scotia*). It will be recalled that Adam of Dryburgh, a generation earlier, referred to Dryburgh as in England and in the kingdom of the Scots. The references to south-east Scotland and Galloway as parts of Scotland in the annal for 1215 are, in fact, the earliest detailed statement in a Scottish source of 'Scotland' as equivalent to the kingdom's territory (Broun 1998, 4 and n. 3). It can be dated to probably 1218 or not long thereafter. The same dating applies for the annal for 1216, in which it can be confirmed, from a passing reference to Scots being left out of Alexander II's army, that not all the kingdom's inhabitants were regarded as Scots (Broun 1999, 142 n. 32). Putting this together, it seems to have been possible for monks of Melrose to regard their abbey as in Scotland without identifying themselves as Scots.

The weakness of interpreting these references to Scotland and Scots as a meaningful sequence is that they are incidental and unpredictable: they may offer glimpses of how monks may have ordinarily used these terms, but it cannot claim to be comprehensive. Nonetheless, with a bit of help from Adam of Dryburgh we could construct a progression from about 1175, when Roxburghshire's inhabitants saw themselves as English living in a part of England in the Scottish kingdom, until by 1215 they saw themselves as English in part of Scotland, but viewed the Scots as sacrilegious savages, until by the late 1280s they finally

⁹ *Inter istos heroes fortissimos erat Rogerus de Rule socius Gwydonus supradicti qui etiam cum ipso mortuus est*, 'among these most valiant heroes was Roger de Rule, the aforesaid Guy's companion who also died with him': *Chron. Melrose*, 129; *ES* ii, 654.

¹⁰ *Chron. Melrose*, 107; *ES* ii, 543–5. The reference to Adam is in the ablative, *Ada*: Croft Dickinson took this to be a daughter, *Ada* (*Chron. Melrose*, 160).

regarded themselves as Scots living in Scotland. But perhaps this is too tidy. If we want a more substantial sense of progression we must turn to the design of the chronicle's content.

It will be recalled that the original chronicle of 1173×4 was predominantly northern English in character. It was suggested that the only systematic attempt to broaden the chronicle's material at this stage was made by Scribe 5, and that, far from seeking to give more prominence to Scottish events, his purpose was to make the text relate to England as a whole. This is not to say that monks of Melrose cared little about kings of Scots, of course. They wrote with some passion, for example, of the heavy yoke of domination and servitude which was lifted by the Quitclaim of Canterbury in 1189. About a decade or two later a king-list beginning with Mael Coluim and Margaret was penned by one of Melrose's charter-scribes using the end of a role of parchment (*Chron. Melrose*, 25–6). In it the kingship was defined by descent from Margaret, reminding us that allegiance to kings of Scots in this period could be based on respect for their English royal ancestry as much as anything else. This brief king-list, which only properly became part of the chronicle when it was first bound, had been associated with the text at least since the mid-thirteenth century. The first attempt to integrate more information about Scottish royal successions into the body of the chronicle itself, however, was when a few kings back to Donnchad (1034–40) were intruded into the text no earlier probably than November 1246. This was merely dipping the toe into the water, however, and still left three centuries with barely a Scottish king mentioned. The next scribe, Scribe 28, was made of much sterner stuff it seems. His ungainly hand can be seen in numerous additions over a period of about twenty years, from the early 1240s to the 1260s. By far the most impressive part of his work was his careful campaign to populate the chronicle from 731 with a complete run of Scottish kings. First he took a plain king-list and made marginal notes on where royal successions should be inserted. He then added notices of royal successions, supplementing these from Cinaed mac Ailpín onwards with verse from a king-list in elegiac couplets. This sometimes required more space than was readily available, forcing him to spill over into both inner and outer margins. Finally he erased his original marginal notes. Although the skill required to achieve this was maybe not as impressive as Scribe 5's blending of sources, Scribe 28's methodical determination was certainly comparable. At last, in the mid-thirteenth century, a serious attempt had been made to make the chronicle more

Scottish.¹¹ Instead of the king of Scots being presented as the heir of English kings, Scribe 28 had turned the chronicle into a record of the Scottish kingship's long and distinct history. From this perspective it is finally possible to see how allegiance to the king of Scots might make Englishmen become Scottish.

Professor Hector MacQueen has written compellingly of how the adoption of pleadable briefs from 1230 onwards was 'a key instrument in the process' whereby royal justice 'began to assert not just ultimate, but also exclusive jurisdiction within the realm in relation to secular land', leading to 'a greater awareness of the existence and significance of an independent legal system' (MacQueen 2005, 249–50). This coincides remarkably well with Scribe 28's efforts, and could readily explain why he might want to promote the Scottish kingship in his chronicle as an enduring institution with a long history of its own. It also offers a context for how nationality could come to be determined first-and-foremost by allegiance. It also coincided with a keener sense of the kingdom's territorial integrity, seen not only in the writing down in 1249 of the hitherto customary Laws of the Marches, as Professor MacQueen has observed, but also in an over ambitious attempt on 13 October 1245 to determine 'the true and ancient bounds and frontiers between the realms' where the border leaves the Tweed at Carham. The English and Scots juries assembled for this purpose, which included the sheriff of Northumberland on the English side and the justiciar of Lothian and the earl of Dunbar on the Scottish side, inevitably chose different routes: the English eventually attempted to make a perambulation on their own, but were forcibly prevented and some unseemly scuffles ensued (Stones 1970, no. 8). The whole sorry affair ended in stalemate.

The Chronicle of Melrose can serve to confirm a greater awareness of the kingdom as a force in Scottish society in the mid-thirteenth century, but it also suggests that it may have taken another generation or two before it resulted in Englishmen becoming Scottish: for the monks of Melrose, at least, the stereotype of Scots as sacrilegious savages may have made it more difficult for them to regard themselves also as Scots. The Chronicle also offers a slightly fuller picture of an earlier stage in the growing importance of Scottish kingship. It has been remarked

¹¹ It is tempting to speculate that there may have been some connection with the burial of Alexander II at Melrose in July 1249.

that a distinctive feature of Scottish charters as compared with English charters from the mid-twelfth century was the frequent use of a phrase explaining that the land or church (or what-have-you) was to be held as freely as any other in the kingdom (Hudson 2003, 131). Professor Barrow has pointed out that the frequent references to 'kingdom of Scotland', 'kingdom of the king of Scots' and similar phrases in this context from the last years of the twelfth century 'is explicable only if the notion of the kingdom of Scotland had become firmly planted in men's minds' (Barrow 1980, 155). The context also suggests why this might have occurred: as Keith Stringer has observed (Stringer 1985, 90), statements that property was held as freely as elsewhere in the kingdom shows an acceptance of standard legal customs throughout the realm—a necessary preliminary to the central role of royal justice from 1230 described by Hector MacQueen. It is easy to see how the expression 'kingdom of Scotland' could be represented in a different genre like a chronicle by *Scocia* on its own. Perhaps the Chronicle of Melrose may therefore be taken as evidence that 'Scotland', in the sense we are familiar with today, had become commonplace by 1215. This should, however, be considered alongside evidence in the chronicle that not all parts of Scotland were equally Scottish. In the annal for 1218, for example, a journey as far as Aberdeen is described as going into 'inner Scotland' (*in profundam Scotiam*), while in the annal for 1265 the Hebrides are referred to as little islands lying around the broad region (or kingdom) of the Scots (*ample regioni Scoctorum*) (*Chron. Melrose*, 70, 128). It is tempting to put these references alongside each other and suggest that between about 1220 and 1290 (when these statements were written into the chronicle) Melrose's idea of itself had moved from being peripheral in 'Scotland' to being central, but again that might be to read too much into a couple of stray comments.

If the overall impression of the chronicle's evidence is that it is more tantalising than substantial, it can still be valued as casting a unique light on how cloistered Englishmen in part of England could become Scots in Scotland. If this can, in turn, be regarded as a consequence of a closer relationship between king and property-holders based on a heightened awareness of the importance of royal authority as the guarantor of their possessions, then it would also be relevant to note that the idea of the kingdom as a single jurisdiction applicable to all its inhabitants was first articulated in a legal document in the Treaty of Perth: 'all the men of the said islands...as well lesser as greater,

shall be subject to the laws and customs of the realm of Scotland' (*APS* i, 420; Donaldson 1974, 34–6). This may only have been an aspiration in 1266. As an idea of a 'kingship extending over territory and the people within it' (MacQueen 1995, 10, referring to the Treaty of Perth), it at least had the same potential to make the birlinn-sailors of Benbecula and their like into Scots as it did the monk-chroniclers of Melrose during the reign of Alexander III.

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LIVING ON THE EDGE: SCANDINAVIAN DUBLIN IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY¹

Clare Downham

The term ‘Scandinavian Dublin’ applies to the years before 1171: That is, prior to the seizure of Dublin by the Henry II and the execution of its last viking king Ascall mac Torcaill. The purpose of this paper is to examine Dublin’s status as a frontier polity. The port had a border position in Ireland. It was identified as a kingdom ruled and inhabited by foreigners (*gaill* was the term most commonly employed in Irish chronicles). Dublin also bordered the sea, and as such its neighbours may be counted as the kingdoms closest to Ireland across the water, namely Man and the Isles, England, Wales and Scotland.

It can be argued that the history of Dublin during the twelfth century has been largely construed from the perspective of those neighbours who were most eager to possess it, namely the English and the Irish. From an English historiographic perspective, events there before 1170 tend to be judged as a prelude to the Angevin invasion (Downham 2003, 55). From an Irish perspective, the contest between leading overkings to control Dublin has sometimes been regarded as part of a wider struggle for national unity; a process which is deemed to have been cut short by Henry II’s arrival (Ó Cróinín 1995, 290–92; Duffy 1997, 81). These hindsight approaches are by no means invalid. However there may be scope for closer examination of Dublin’s quest for self-determination and power in relation to its neighbours before 1170.²

¹ This paper was given at ‘The March in the Medieval West conference held at University College Dublin, 15–17 September 2005 with thanks to the organisers: Emmett O’Byrne and Edel Bhreathnach. An abridged version was presented at the ‘Celtic-Norse Relationships in the Irish Sea in the Middle Ages’ conference, University of Oslo, 5 November 2005, for which I owe thanks to Jón Víðar Sigurðsson and Gro Steinsland.

² The approach in this paper is stimulated by work undertaken since the 1990s on the Irish Sea region by a range of scholars (for example Ian Beuermann, Seán Duffy, and Kari Maund) which has been significant in broadening debate over Dublin’s history in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Three subjects will be briefly explored in this paper. The first is the identity of the Dubliners in the twelfth century, the second is the town's political dealings with its Irish neighbours, and the last is Dublin's connections across the Irish Sea.

Identity

The subject of identity is undoubtedly complex, but some generalisations may be made by dividing our evidence into the broad categories of assigned and self-expressed identity. Here it is relevant to mention R. R. Davies's observation that 'the medieval construction of the world, ... was one which defined it as a collection of peoples; whatever modern historians care to believe, contemporaries were not in doubt about the reality and solidity of such communities' (1994, 7). In other words the medieval world defined people by ethnicity no matter how fragile and arbitrary its labels might be.

To some degree we can evaluate the identity of twelfth-century Dubliners from the opinions of their neighbours. Dublin during the twelfth-century comprised of an urban settlement but also a rural hinterland which was defined in Irish sources as *Fine Gall* or *crich Gall* (kindred or territory of the foreigners) (Downham 2005, 170–71). The use of the term *gaill* in Irish sources to refer to the inhabitants of Dublin in the twelfth century suggests that they were regarded as non-Irish or foreign despite the presence of Viking communities in Ireland since the ninth century (Downham 2004b, 75). Further evidence that the Dubliners remained culturally distinct can be found in the writings of Gerald of Wales. He stated that the inhabitants of the Viking towns were different from the Irish and that they were called Ostmen (O'Meara 1982, 122; 1948–50, 175). This was a term derived from Norse meaning an 'easterner' (perhaps reflecting a self-perception among the people of Dublin that their ancestors came from the east) (Curtis 1908, 209, n. 1). The Norse customs and dress of those inhabiting Ireland's major ports are also referred to by an Arab geographer Tarsi 'al-Akhbar who wrote around 1080 (James 1978, 5–9). He assumed that the people he encountered reflected the character of Ireland as a whole and thus identified it as a Viking land. While these accounts provide strong evidence that the inhabitants of Dublin retained Scandinavian cultural traits, they were not uniformly regarded as a Scandinavian people.

Norse literature displayed an awareness that the people of Dublin had a claim to Scandinavian roots, but as John Hines has pointed out they were often labelled *irskr* or Irish (2002, 21). Therefore they were seen as different to the people of Iceland or Norway who wrote these texts and the strange ways of Vikings from the Gaelic west are sometimes commented on in sagas (Sigurðsson 2000, 86–102). This ambiguity is further highlighted in Welsh sources which sometimes refer to Dubliners as being of Germanic stock and sometimes as being Irish. An example is the record of Dubliners being present on Anglesey in 1144. One version of the *Annales Cambriae* and one version of *Brut y Tywysogyon* identify them as *Germanici* or *Gemanweyr*. The other versions of these texts and *Brenhinoedd y Saeson* identify them as Irish (*Hibernenses* or *Gwydil*).³ In terms of their assigned identity the inhabitants of the Viking towns of Ireland could be deemed as a people apart, they were neither fully Irish nor fully Scandinavian. But how was identity defined among themselves?

The medieval Dubliners might be adjudged to express their identity in two broad fashions. On the one hand there was ceremonial expression through symbolic gestures on special occasions or among the political elite as a way of enforcing a sense of common citizenship. On the other hand there was mundane expression, acted out everyday life through media such as language and material culture. Of course the two categories are interlinked but they may be separated here for convenient analysis. The symbolic life of medieval Dublin was partly expressed through monuments. There was a Scandinavian style thing-site, destroyed in 1685, but which as Haliday remarked remained a focus for civic ceremony for military or legal purposes long after the Viking Age. For example, civic dignitaries gathered on it to oversee the muster of the city's forces in 1593 and it is recorded as a place of capital punishment in 1613 (Haliday 1884, 143–66). A pillar stone (called the Long Stone) also marked in symbolic fashion the entrance of Dublin harbour from the Viking Age until the seventeenth century (Holm 2000, 257). Urban ceremonies may have congregated around the assembly hall mentioned by Gerald of Wales (Scott and Martin 1978, 67). The walls of Dublin may have also had more than a purely

³ ab Ithel 1860, *s.a.* 1144; Jones 1941, 90; Jones 1952, *s.a.* [1144]; Jones 1955, *s.a.* [1144]; Jones 1971, *s.a.* [1144].

functional role. A substantial circuit was built around the town at the turn of the twelfth century (Wallace 1992, 45). This perhaps served as a statement of civic pride and exclusivity, creating a boundary between the town and the outside world.

Awareness of Dublin's distinct political identity may have been promoted by origin legends about the port which circulated in the twelfth century. Versions of these legends are recorded in *Historia Norwegiae* composed in the mid-to-late twelfth century, also in the twelfth-century *Historia Gruffydd ap Cynan* and the writings of Gerald of Wales. According to Gerald, the viking towns of Dublin, Waterford and Limerick were each founded by one of three brothers; Olaf, Sitric and Ivar (O'Meara 1948–50, 175; 1982, 122). According to the *Historia Gruffydd* the Norwegian king Harald Finehair built Dublin and his brother ruled Waterford.⁴ While *Historia Norwegiae* dates the foundation of the towns to the time of Harald Finehair, credit is given to the descendants of Rognvald of Møre, first earl of Orkney.⁵ Although these legends exhibit some variation, there is striking correspondence in that the viking towns in Ireland were thought to have been founded at the same time by members of the same family. As the authors of these accounts from Norway, Wales and England were linked through some familiarity with Irish affairs, one might conclude that the legend circulated if not originated among the people of Dublin. Comparison may be made with the legend of the Rurikids, the dominant viking dynasty of Russia. The story is recorded in the twelfth century that three brothers Rurik, Sineus and Truvor each founded the towns of Novgorod, Belozero and Izborsk in the mid 850s, and that Rurik was the ancestor of future viking kings in Russia (Duczko 2004, 80–81). The existence of a distinct origin legend for the viking towns of Ireland is one indicator of their separate political identity.

What about the more everyday expressions of identity in Viking Age Dublin? In summary, these highlight diverse cultural influences on life in the town and demonstrate that the population was neither wholly Irish nor Scandinavian in character. In terms of language, inscriptions have been recovered from Dublin excavations dating from the late tenth to the early twelfth century (Barnes *et al.* 1997). These are composed in a range of three scripts, ogam, Latin and runes and they exhibit

⁴ Evans 1990, 25, 56; Jesch 1996, 117–48.

⁵ Ekrem *et al.* 2003, 66–67; Downham 2004a, 65–69.

knowledge of four tongues, Irish, Norse, Latin and English. As a number of these inscriptions were found on mundane objects such as scraps of wood or animal bones, they may provide an insight into languages used by a semi-literate class of urban dweller, and not just the elite.

Other features of town life emphasise the cosmopolitan character of Dublin. This can be seen in two key elements of everyday life, namely the homes people lived in and the way they prepared food. In terms of domestic architecture, the so called 'Type 1' houses identified by Pat Wallace predominate in the Dublin excavations. These are characterised by their rectangular shape with a door at each end, central hearth, side benches and wattle construction, and they have been found in archaeological levels dating from the ninth to the twelfth centuries (Wallace 1992, 47–48). Type 1 houses became less popular during the twelfth century, but they persisted as a form distinct from contemporary Irish and Scandinavian dwellings. The twelfth century was also marked by increasing use of sunken-floored dwellings and sill-beam construction.⁶ The house types found in Viking-Age Dublin can be seen to represent distinctive urban styles which developed in Ireland through a combination of influences.

Dubliners differed from many of their Irish neighbours through their use of pottery. Large quantities were imported to Dublin in the twelfth century from England and Northern France.⁷ Apart from the souterrain ware of Ulster (dating from the ninth century onwards) and Leinster Cooking Ware (dating from the mid-twelfth century onwards) there was no tradition of pottery making in Ireland before the English invasion.⁸ The use of ceramics in Ireland seems to reflect the influence of Viking-Age trading networks rather than direct Scandinavian influence.⁹ Pottery became a significant part of the material culture of the viking towns due to external trading links, and this in turn influenced customs of food preparation and consumption.

The impression of eclecticism in Dublin's material culture extends to other excavation finds which highlight the town's contacts abroad (Wallace 1987). It is also exhibited in the saints' cults observed by the twelfth-century inhabitants of Dublin. This topic has been studied in

⁶ Wallace 1992, 55–60. Interesting discussion is provided by Price 1994.

⁷ Hurst 1988.

⁸ McCutcheon 2006.

⁹ Alan Lane, 'Viking Ceramics in the Hebrides', paper presented at the Fifteenth Viking Congress, University College Cork, 23 August 2005.

detail by Howard Clarke and he has highlighted links with Norway, through the cult of Olaf; to Ireland, through veneration of Brigit, Patrick and Columba among others; to England, through the veneration of Werburgh; and to the Continent through a range of international saints (Clarke 2004).

Of course within Dublin many different identities may have been expressed, but in generalised terms the identity of the townspeople appears eclectic and divergent from their neighbours. Nevertheless the boundaries between Irish and Hiberno-Scandinavian urban identity were permeable and blurred by centuries of interaction and intermarriage. Viking leaders spoke Irish and frequently adopted Gaelic names.¹⁰ Conversely Norse names found their way into Irish families as shown by chronicle records of the twelfth century.¹¹ Dublin was also economically dependent on the exchange of perishable and manufactured goods inland (Valante 2000). Art styles also crossed political boundaries.¹² Thus the differences between the Vikings of Dublin and their Irish neighbours were not necessarily self-evident. They were reinforced on the one hand by a conscious decision to remain separate; and on the other hand by contacts abroad which drew Dublin within the cultural sphere of other trading communities around the Irish Sea.

Political relations within Ireland

Dublin's relations with her neighbours in Ireland were coloured by the attempts of various kings to bring the wealthy port under their control. The political power of Dublin was in decline from the late tenth century (Mac Shamhráin 2001). While Dublin's northerly neighbours, the overkings of Meath, also suffered a series of setbacks from the early eleventh century, the opportunity arose for the overkings of Leinster located to the south to impose their control over the town. In 1052 the Leinster overking Diarmait mac Mael na mBó succeeded in expelling the viking king and he assumed direct authority over the port.¹³ This

¹⁰ Ó Cuív 1988; Bhreathnach 1996, 37–41; Ó hAodha 1991, 235; Holm 2000, 260.

¹¹ O'Donovan 1856, *s.aa.* 1103, 1124, 1126, 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1138, 1139, 1148, 1154, 1158, 1161, 1164, 1165, 1168, 1169.

¹² Clarke 2000, 38; Johnson 2004, 81–87; Laing and Laing 1992, 186–90.

¹³ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983, *s.a.* 1052.8; Duffy 1992, 94.

set a precedent for his descendants in the twelfth century who sought to bring Dublin under their control (Duffy 1997, 77).

Other Irish kings from more distant provinces were not content to be left out of this struggle. Dublin was by far the wealthiest settlement in Ireland and its fiscal and military resources offered overkings the opportunity to outdo their rivals who vied for recognition as the most powerful ruler in Ireland (Ó Corráin 2001, 26). During the early twelfth century the Uí Bhriain dynasty of Munster acted as overlords of Dublin. This control slipped from their hands by 1118 and the overking of Connacht, Toirdelbach Ua Conchobair, took control.¹⁴ Rather than seeking to rule the port directly, he allowed the overking of Leinster Énna Mac Murchada to hold it under his overlordship. When Énna died, Toirdelbach attempted to pass Dublin to his own son Conchobar but he was ousted by the people of Dublin in 1127.¹⁵

It is not entirely clear who ruled the port after this coup, but power appears to have passed into the hands of local chieftain named Torcall by 1133.¹⁶ It is not clear whether Torcall was descended from the dynasty of Ívarr who had ruled Dublin until 1094, but later records suggest that his family were major landowners in the Dublin area.¹⁷ A close alliance ensued between Dublin and the Leinster overking Diarmait Mac Murchada. Diarmait used Dublin's military might to wage war against Waterford in 1137 and 1140, demonstrating that no love was lost between the Viking towns who had a long history of rivalry.¹⁸ Diarmait's alliance with Dublin was briefly disrupted in 1141 when Conchobar Ua Briain overking of Munster took control of the port.¹⁹ He was soon ousted and the townspeople invited Ottar, a viking chieftain from Man to become their king.²⁰ Ottar initially co-operated with the sons of Torcall, but a succession dispute emerged which led to Ottar's death in 1148.²¹ Thereafter the sons of Torcall controlled the port under the supervision of Diarmait Mac Murchada.

¹⁴ Stokes 1993, *s.a.* [1118].

¹⁵ Hennessy 1871, *s.a.* 1127; Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983, *s.a.* 1127.5.

¹⁶ Hennessy 1871, *s.a.* 1133.

¹⁷ Clarke 2000, 36–37; Duffy 1992, 122 n. 46; O'Byrne 2003, 25.

¹⁸ Hennessy 1871, *s.a.* 1137; Murphy 1896, *s.a.* 1137; O'Donovan 1856, *s.aa.* 1137, 1140.

¹⁹ O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1141.

²⁰ O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1142.

²¹ ab Ithel 1860, *s.a.* 1144; Jones 1941, 90; Jones 1952, *s.a.* [1144]; Jones 1955, *s.a.* [1144]; Jones 1971, *s.a.* [1144]; Hennessy 1866, *s.aa.* [1146], [1148]; Stokes 1993, *s.aa.* [1146], [1148].

During the 1150s Diarmait was subjected to Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn overking of Northern Uí Neill and this gave Muirchertach a level of control over Dublin. Despite Muirchertach's attempt to buy the support of the Dubliners in 1154 with a stipend of 1,200 cows, his intervention caused resentment.²² In 1155 some of the Dubliners tried and failed to obtain Godred king of Man as their leader, and after Brodar son of Torcall king of Dublin died in 1160 the townspeople rebelled against their overlord, Diarmait Mac Murchada.²³ Diarmait re-imposed his authority in 1162 and he may have sought to consolidate his authority by disenfranchising the descendants of Torcall (Meic Thorcaill). Diarmait granted some of the Meic Thorcaill lands in Baldoyle (Co. Dublin) to Christ Church Cathedral in 1162, and his brother-in-law, Lorcán Ua Tuathail was consecrated to the see of Dublin in the same year.²⁴ Nevertheless, Diarmait failed to secure the loyalty of the Dubliners through these actions. When Ruairi Ua Conchobair overking of Connacht challenged Diarmait in 1166, the Dubliners were drawn to his side.²⁵ This coup was assisted by Ruairi's payment of 4,000 cows to the town and perhaps by his support for Meic Thorcaill, thus winning the favour of Dublin's most influential dynasty.²⁶ Ruairi's success caused Diarmait to flee Ireland and this led ultimately to the Angevin invasion of 1171 (Duffy 1997, 78).

One factor which emerges from this narrative is how difficult it was for an Irish overking to dominate Dublin without the co-operation of leading townspeople. Alien rulers who imposed their authority in 1126 and 1141 lasted only a year before they were thrown out.²⁷ Uí Chennselaig over-kings of Leinster enjoyed more success. Members of that dynasty ruled without any significant challenges to their power for up to six years at a time. Presumably the intermittent hold of Uí Chennselaig over the town since the mid-eleventh century gave them some legitimacy in the eyes of the Dubliners and they may have made efforts to win the support of the wealthy burgesses of the town. It appears that Irish overkings enjoyed greater success in controlling Dublin

²² Murphy 1896, *s.a.* 1161; O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1154.

²³ Broderick 1995, *s.aa.* 1160, 1161.

²⁴ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983, *s.a.* 1162.5; Butler 1845, 50.

²⁵ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983, *s.a.* 1166.9; O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1166; Stokes 1993, *s.a.* [1166].

²⁶ Hennessy 1871, *s.a.* 1171; O'Donovan 1856, *s.aa.* 1167, 1170, 1171.

²⁷ Hennessy 1871, *s.a.* 1127; Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983, *s.a.* 1127.5; O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1142.

when they had the support of native leaders, hence the emergence of the dynasty of Torcall during the twelfth century. When a local leader was not forthcoming, on at least two occasions the people of Dublin were prepared to appeal to the kingdom of Man and the Isles for a leader rather than be ruled by a non-Leinster overking.²⁸ Thus the Dubliners appeared to prefer leaders of mixed Gaelic-Scandinavian descent with whom they might more readily identify.

Dublin's independence was also expressed in the ecclesiastical sphere. During the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries its bishops were consecrated in Canterbury, thus avoiding subjection to an ecclesiastical authority within Ireland (Flanagan 1989, 30–31). This was a source of controversy in 1121 when Cellach archbishop of Armagh sought to bring the town under his jurisdiction.²⁹ Dublin's segregation from the Irish ecclesiastical hierarchy was ended during Diarmait Mac Murchada's control of the town. In 1152 the synod of Kells made Dublin the seat of an archbishopric of Leinster.³⁰ When Diarmait brought Dublin under his direct control in 1162 he secured this position for his brother-in-law Lorcán, and then used a series of ecclesiastical endowments and alliances to try and bring the port more tightly within his grasp (Flanagan 1997, 119, 125). In particular Diarmait's foundation of Augustinian houses in Dublin; at All Hallows near the symbolic Long Stone, and at St Mary del Hogges near the thing-site, seem intended to mark his authority on ceremonial space within the city (Flanagan 1997, 118–19). Indeed, in the years 1162–66 it could be argued that Diarmait was seeking to make Dublin the capital of his kingdom, and capital of Ireland (Duffy 1992, 128–29; 1997, 77).

This brings me to the question of whether Dublin could be regarded as the capital of Ireland before 1170. Several historians have called it so, pointing out that control of Dublin was essential for overkings who sought to impose their rule across the island.³¹ This was undoubtedly the case in economic terms because of the resources which Dublin represented. Irish chronicles also imply that a level of pomp was involved when great rulers imposed their authority over the town.

²⁸ Broderick 1995, *s.a.* 1144 [= 1154]; Murphy 1896, *s.a.* 1134; O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1142.

²⁹ Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill 1983, *s.a.* 1121.7, Hennessy 1871, *s.a.* 1121; O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1121; Dumville 1993, 259–64.

³⁰ Stokes 1993, *s.a.* [1152].

³¹ Byrne 1974, 140; Duffy 1997, 80–81; Ó Corrain 2001, 26–27.

The large stipends paid by Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn and Ruairi Ua Conchobair certainly convey that impression.³² Although there was growing awareness of Dublin's importance, it could be argued that the port remained too foreign in its associations in the twelfth century to be successfully established as capital of Ireland in the symbolic sense.

Dublin was clearly regarded as significant in the literature of this period and it was identified as one of the 'wonders of Ireland' (Dobbs 1954). Nevertheless the alien nature of its inhabitants and the validation of Irish claims to rule it are recurrent themes. As Donnchadh Ó Corráin has pointed out, Irish royal propaganda focused on the evil deeds of the Vikings' ancestors as a means of justifying Dublin's subjection to Irish overlordship (1978, 31–32). Rather than being central to Irish identity, the port symbolised a foreign people whose character was negatively contrasted with that of the Irish.

In twelfth-century literature Tara remained prominent as a symbol for Ireland's unity.³³ Nevertheless its links were with the distant past and it was not promoted as a potential site for a new capital. The gathering of troops by Ruairi Ua Conchobhair at Tara in 1169 before marching against Diarmait Mac Murchada and his English allies surely paid homage to Tara's legendary significance.³⁴ Uí Chonchobair overkings also celebrated the *oenach* or fair of Taitiu in 1120 and 1167.³⁵ This was another ancient site rich with symbolism concerning the concept of Irish unity (Ó Corráin 1978, 20). Various synods and royal gatherings presided over by Irish overkings during the twelfth century also sought to foster a sense of national identity, but these events were not concentrated on Dublin.³⁶

It can be argued that Dublin avoided being the capital of Ireland before 1170 through its own struggle for self-determination. Dublin's persistent efforts to remain distinct, expressed in its origin legends and symbols of statehood, may have created an ideological obstacle for overkings who sought to rule all Ireland. Nevertheless the Dubliners ultimately failed in their quest for independence as the port and its hinterland was annexed in 1171.

³² O'Donovan 1856, *s.aa.* 1154, 1166; Murphy 1896, *s.a.* 1161; Stokes 1993, *s.a.* [1166].

³³ Bhreathnach 1995, nos. 17, 18, 59, 62, 71, 84–86, 98, 154, 155, 163, 168, 170, 179.

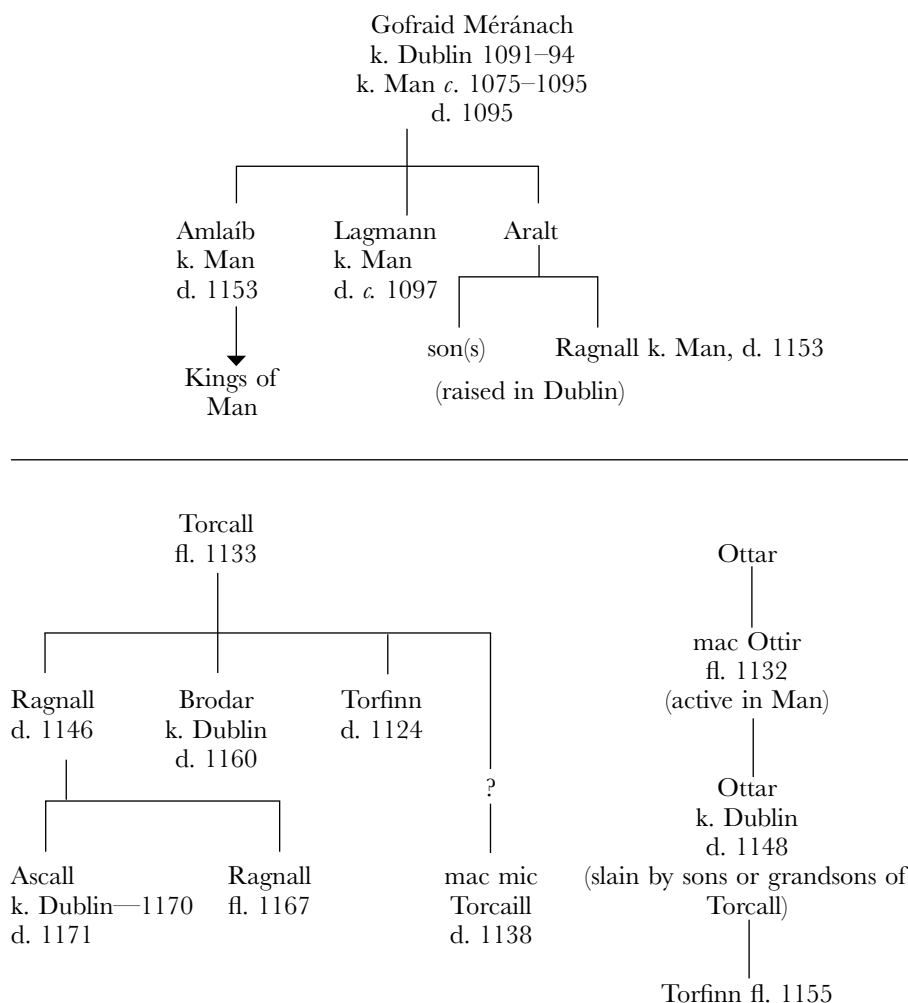
³⁴ O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1169.

³⁵ Stokes 1993, *s.aa.* [1120], [1167].

³⁶ Dumville 1997, 38–39; e.g. Stokes 1993, *s.aa.* [1111], [1120], [1143], [1144], [1148], [1152], [1158], [1162], [1166], [1167], [1168].

Political relations abroad

The last theme of this paper is Dublin's political links across the Irish Sea. The importance of the kingdom of Man and the Isles has already been touched upon as a source of alternative leaders for Dublin. The relationship between the two kingdoms is illustrated in Illus. 1. The brief unity of the kingdoms under a single leadership in the eleventh century gave kings of Man some claim to power in Dublin. Irish leaders sought to capitalise on these links by intermarrying with the Manx royal dynasty.



Illus. 1 The Viking Rulers of Dublin 1091–1171.

The Uí Bhriain dynasty of Munster intermarried with the family of Echmarcach mac Ragnall who ruled Dublin and then Man in the mid-eleventh century. This led to Uí Bhriain dynasts ruling Man and the Isles briefly in the 1090s and again in the second decade of the twelfth century (Duffy 1992 108–16). Uí Bhriain intrusion into this strategic sphere of Irish Sea politics appears to have prompted kings from Norway and England to engage with Manx politics during the twelfth century to ensure that the area did not fall into Irish control (Beuermann 2002, 133–46).

Magnus Barelegs of Norway led campaigns into the Irish Sea between 1098 and 1103 and Henry I of England brought Olaf son of Godred, future king of Man and the Isles, to be raised at the English court.³⁷ Olaf's nephews (sons of his brother Harold) were raised in Dublin.³⁸ The close relationship between Man and Dublin erupted into a complex series of power struggles in the 1140s and 1150s. In 1142 Ottar grandson of Ottar, a chieftain from the Isles, went to rule Dublin which posed a challenge to the status of Olaf, king of Man.³⁹ Ragnall son of Harold then came from Dublin to contest the kingdom of Man and the Isles in 1152/3 and he killed Olaf. Ragnall's reign was nevertheless short-lived as he was killed by Olaf's son Godred who returned from Norway soon after.⁴⁰ Godred, having been established as king of Man and the Isles, was invited to rule Dublin in 1154/5 but Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn prevented this.⁴¹ Muirchertach later gave his daughter Finnualla in marriage to Godred, perhaps in an attempt to heal relations.⁴² The feud between Ottar's family and Godred's family continued during this time and in 1156, Thorfinn son of Ottar attempted to raise the son of Somerled (Godred's brother-in-law) to the kingship of Man.⁴³ The series of difficulties faced by Olaf and his son Godred as kings of Man, caused them to turn increasingly to Norway for support. Godred visited the royal court in 1152/3 and in 1160 (after he had been ousted from the throne by Somerled) (Beuermann 2002, 233–53). It seems that the impact of these developments was to increase the efforts of Henry II to control Irish Sea politics. Some of Henry's most loyal advisors may

³⁷ Broderick, 1995, *s.a.* 1098; Power, 1986.

³⁸ Broderick, 1995, *s.a.* 1142 [=1152].

³⁹ O'Donovan 1856, *s.a.* 1142.

⁴⁰ Broderick 1995, *s.a.* 1143 [=1153].

⁴¹ Broderick 1995, *s.a.* 1144 [=1154].

⁴² Broderick 1995, *s.a.* 1176.

⁴³ Broderick 1995, *s.aa.* 1144 [=1154], 1156.

have encouraged this. During the civil war (1135–54) the geographical base of Henry's support was focused along the south-western coast of England from men whose livelihoods depended in part on Irish Sea trade (Poole 1955, 138–41).

As for Wales, Dublin had involvements here too. The participation of Muirchertach Ua Briain in Irish Sea politics led him to support Gruffydd ap Cynan, a claimant to the kingship of Gwynedd who was raised in Dublin (Evans 1990). Gruffydd benefited from the hospitality of Muirchertach during periods of exile, as did his ally Owain, who fled to Ireland in 1109.⁴⁴ Muirchertach's support of these Welsh princes conflicted with the interests of Henry I, who sought to extend English rule in Wales. After Muirchertach's death, Irish participation in Welsh politics declined, partly through Henry's own efforts (Poole 1955, 290). However these links resurfaced during the English Anarchy. The sons of Gruffydd ap Cynan fought against Norman leaders in Wales in 1138 and a viking fleet from Ireland was recruited to attack St Dogmaels.⁴⁵ This fleet was no doubt encouraged by the opportunity to capture booty. In 1144 the sons of Gruffydd fell out and Cadwaladr raised a fleet in Dublin to attack his brother Owain but the brothers arranged a truce. The Dublin fleet were denied the opportunity of a lucrative civil war and sufficient payment for their services in coming to Wales, so they captured Cadwaladr and held him to ransom for 2000 captives. Owain attacked the Dubliners' ships and they were forced to flee home.⁴⁶ The ransom request may give an insight into the continuity of the slave trade between Ireland and Wales during these years. After 1144 there is no further record of Dublin war fleets being used in Wales until 1165 when Henry II briefly hired a Dublin fleet to attack the Welsh.⁴⁷ The interim silence in the records may be due to Henry's diplomatic efforts to prevent Dublin's resources being used contrary to his interests in Wales.

Turning to England, it has already been noted that Dublin's involvement in Irish Sea politics led successive English kings to seek greater control there. The potential for royal enemies to seek support in Ireland

⁴⁴ Jones 1941, 44; Jones 1952, *s.a.* [1109]; Jones 1955, *s.a.* [1109]; Jones 1971, *s.a.* [1109].

⁴⁵ *ab* Ithel 1860, *s.a.* 1138.

⁴⁶ *ab* Ithel 1860, *s.a.* 1144; Jones 1941, 90; Jones 1952, *s.a.* [1144]; Jones 1955, *s.a.* [1144]; Jones 1971, *s.a.* [1144].

⁴⁷ Jones 1941, 112; Jones 1952, *s.a.* [1165]; Jones 1955, *s.a.* [1165]; Jones 1971, *s.a.* [1165].

was demonstrated in 1102 when the Pembrokeshire rebel Arnulf de Montgomery, married the daughter of Muirchertach Ua Briain in return for a promise of military support (Candon 1988; Curtis 1921).

To some extent English rulers sought to influence Irish affairs in the sphere of ecclesiastical politics. Successive archbishops of Canterbury pursued their claim to authority over the Irish church from the late eleventh century. Dublin was used as a foothold for these ambitions. Its bishops were consecrated in Canterbury in 1096 and 1121 (Flanagan 1989, 21–23, 29–31). King Stephen tried to obstruct Irish efforts to gain papal recognition for an ecclesiastical hierarchy which made Dublin free from English control (Beuermann 2002, 214). Despite this, in 1152 Dublin became the seat of an archbishopric which was fully incorporated within the Irish diocesan system. The subsequent efforts of the English church to gain papal sanction for military intervention in Ireland have been well documented and debated by other historians.⁴⁸ However, ecclesiastical matters alone cannot explain the invasion.

A key debate concerning Henry II is whether he had always nurtured ambitions to conquer Ireland, or whether the invasion of 1170 was a response to a particular chain of events. A case can be made that Henry sought to stabilise relations with Ireland through good relations with Diarmait Mac Murchada prior to his coronation (Martin 1987, 62). Diarmait controlled Dublin and the south-eastern coasts of Ireland intermittently from the 1140s. Both men shared interests in Bristol and Irish Sea trade. Bristol was the major trading partner of Dublin and the focus of Henry's support during the English civil war. Diarmait was also friendly with Robert fitz Harding, a wealthy merchant of that town who appears to have financed Henry during the darkest days of that conflict.⁴⁹ Robert had acquired lands near Bristol from Henry's half-brother, Robert Earl of Gloucester. The earl was a major supporter of Henry's cause from 1139 until his death in 1147 (Given-Wilson and Curteis 1984, 74–93).

This network of connections is demonstrated in 1141 when King Stephen was held captive by Mabel, wife of Robert Earl of Gloucester. At the same time the earl was in the hands of Stephen's supporters.

⁴⁸ Sheehy 1975, 10–16, 23; Flanagan 1989, 7–55; Kostick 2005. The importance of trade in Anglo-Irish relations is illustrated by the events of 1102 and 1170: Mynors *et al.* 1998–99, I, 738–9 (V.409); Scott and Martin 1978, 71; Hays and Jones 1990, 300–01.

⁴⁹ Patterson 1989, 109–110; Hays and Jones 1990, 294.

While Stephen's allies threatened to send Robert to Boulogne (Stephen had married the Countess of Boulogne), Mabel threatened to send Stephen to Ireland (King and Potter 1998, 118–9 (III.65)). It may be guessed that Diarmait would have been expected to provide suitable accommodation.

Good relations between Henry and Dublin may have soured in 1154 when the Irish overking Muirchertach MacLochlainn imposed his authority over the port.⁵⁰ Muirchertach's determination to have a say in Dublin affairs is suggested by his payment of 1,200 cows to the citizens as a stipend to secure their allegiance. This threatened Henry's policy of stabilising relations with Dublin through common interests with Diarmait. It was in the following year that the council of Winchester was held. According to Robert of Torigny its purpose was to discuss plans for an invasion of Ireland, but because the idea 'was not pleasing to the Empress, Henry's mother, the expedition was put off to another time' (Howlett 1884–89, IV, 186). It appears that the papal bull *Laudabiliter* was issued shortly after the Council and this gave some support for a projected invasion of Ireland.⁵¹ These events may be interpreted as a direct response to the subjection of Dublin to the Irish overking Muirchertach Mac Lochlainn in 1154. I would argue that Muirchertach's action was more significant than the ecclesiastical independence of Dublin from Canterbury in determining Angevin royal policy. While it is possible that Henry would have invaded Ireland in 1155 had not his mother intervened, I think it more likely that he was using the papal bull and the council as threats against Dublin not to act against his interests in Britain.

Taking these events into account, it may be understood why Henry II resumed good relations with Diarmait Mac Murchadha once Dublin was firmly under his control after 1162. In 1165 Henry hired a Dublin fleet to attack Wales, and it was to Henry that Diarmait went in 1166 to seek help following his expulsion from Ireland.⁵² Diarmait's expulsion and uncertainty over the fate of Dublin may have led Henry to invade Ireland in 1170. It seems that his first concern was to bring the major ports under Angevin control and Dublin was swiftly annexed (Scott and

⁵⁰ O'Donovan, 1856, *s.a.* 1154; Murphy, 1896, *s.a.* 1161.

⁵¹ Sheehy 1962–65, I, 15–16 (no. 4); Sheehy 1975, 13–15; Webb 1929, 42; McGarry 1962, 274–75.

⁵² Jones 1941, 112; Jones 1952, *s.a.* [1165]; Jones 1955, *s.a.* [1165]; Jones 1971, *s.a.* [1165]; Flanagan 1989, 56–76; Hays and Jones 1990, 295.

Martin 1978, 89; Duffy 1997, 80). Trading privileges in the port were then granted to the loyal citizens of Bristol (Gilbert 1899–1944, I, 1).

But what was the fate of the inhabitants of Dublin after 1170? Initially it appears that Ostmen received preferential treatment compared to their Irish neighbours (O'Byrne 2004, 115). They were placed under the special protection of the crown and Hamond mac Torcaill, who must have been a close relation of the last Ostman king, had his lands at Kinsealy near Portmarnock confirmed in 1174 (O'Byrne 2003, 25). These concessions were probably inspired by economic and political expediency rather than Henry's magnanimity. Over time the Ostmen found themselves excluded from gilds and burgess rights. Although they were entitled to English law, they found it increasingly difficult for authorities to recognise them as being anything other than Irish. Edward I received a petition to this effect in the late thirteenth century.⁵³ It appears that the Ostmen came to inhabit an ethnic no-man's land, a harsh fate in a culture where identity and ethnicity were virtually synonymous (Davies 1994, 17–18). The cession of the Western Isles from Norwegian to Scottish control in 1266 gradually eroded any trading advantage to be had from maintaining elements of Scandinavian identity or language (Duncan 1975, 577–82). It is around the end of thirteenth century that the Ostmen disappeared as an ethnic category in Ireland. Their descendants assumed an Irish or English persona (Curtis 1908, 219).

In conclusion it can be said that the inhabitants of Dublin in the twelfth century had a liminal or hybrid identity. They were neither recognised as being fully Irish or Scandinavian. However it would be wrong to see them as victims assigned a marginal identity by their neighbours. Rather they consciously played their frontier role to some advantage. Particularly in the sphere of trade, the cosmopolitan identity of the Dubliners made them ideal go-betweens. It also suited their role as mercenaries in Irish Sea politics. By maintaining a separate identity, the people of Dublin also sought to maintain their political independence from Irish overkings. Only after the English conquest of Dublin and the steady erosion of the Ostmen's rights was this distinctive Hiberno-Scandinavian identity dissolved.

⁵³ Sweetman and Handcock 1875–86, III, 306; Curtis 1908, 213–15.

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IMAGE AND IMAGINATION: THE INCHMARNOCK ‘HOSTAGE STONE’

Christopher Lowe

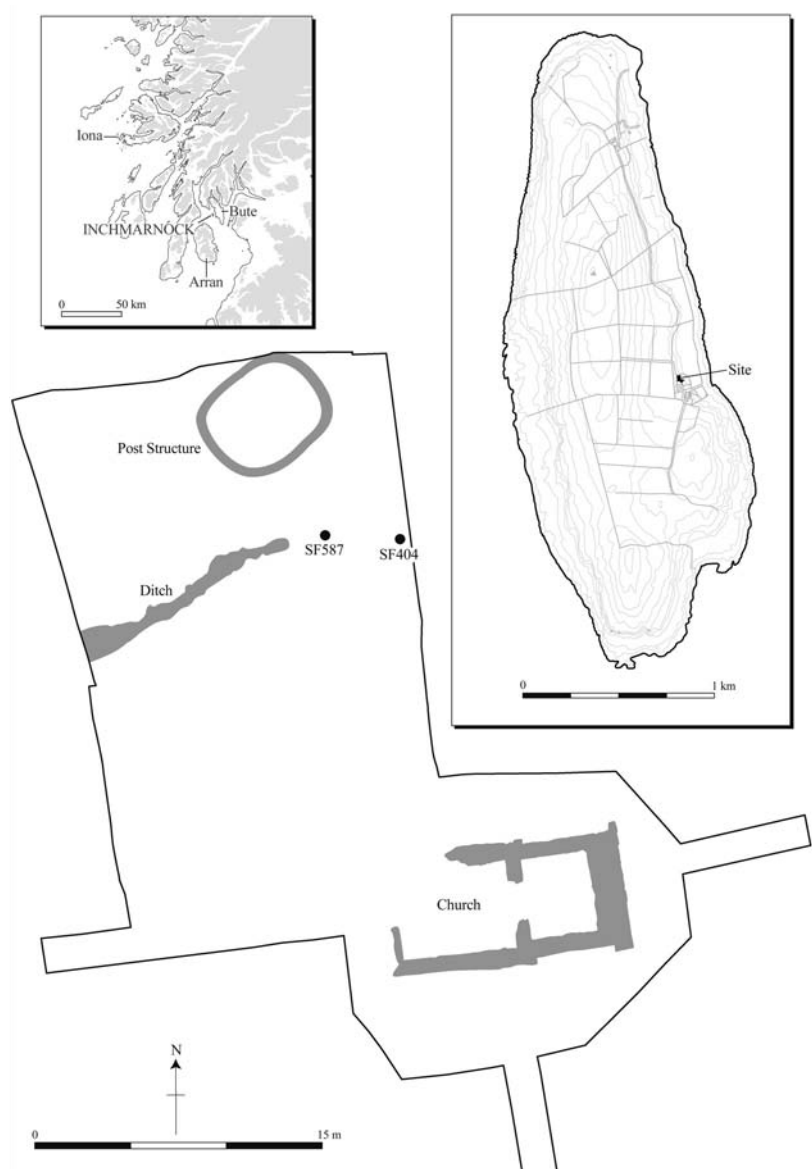
Introduction (Illus. 2)

Excavation to the north of the medieval St Marnock’s church on the island of Inchmarnock, off the west coast of Bute, has revealed the remains of what is interpreted as an early monastic enclosure, together with a number of workshops and an exceptional number of pieces of inscribed slate. Provisionally dated to the eighth or ninth century AD—although later pieces are also present—this is the largest assemblage of such material known from Scotland. Additional pieces of early medieval sculpture, carved in a variety of different techniques, have also been recovered during the excavation.

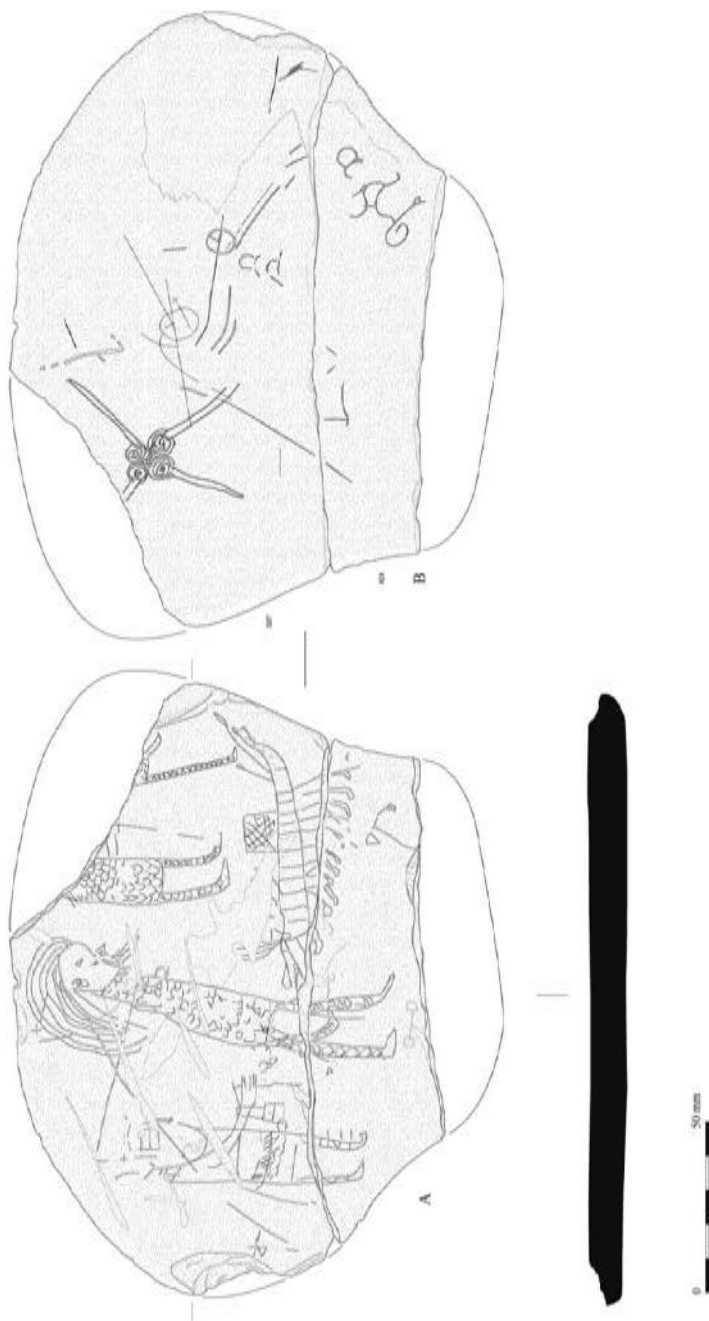
The decorated and inscribed slate assemblage includes examples of abstract designs and casual graffiti but also what are clearly practice pieces for the composition of more complex designs. Much of the assemblage is poorly stratified; a handful of pieces, however, were recovered from well-stratified deposits associated with metalworking and other activities. As ‘pattern books’ for the creation of designs in other media, the site potentially offers the opportunity of understanding better the context in which this material was produced. Meanwhile, literacy at the site is attested by a number of fragments with practice writing and pieces of text. Among the inscriptions are examples of Gaelic, Latin and ogham script. Other inscribed slates from the site provide insights into the dress, weaponry, buildings and ship technology of the time. Among these is SF404/587, the so-called ‘Hostage Stone’ itself, complete with its armoured and armed warriors and their boat. This paper explores its iconography and considers what story—if any—the image depicts.

Circumstances of discovery

The stone was found in two pieces, roughly 4 m and a year apart. The smaller piece (SF404) was found in 2001 during the excavation of a 2 m



Illus. 2 Location map of Inchmarnock and details of the excavation.



Illus. 3 The inscribed stone SF587-404.

wide trial trench to the north of the church; the larger fragment (SF587) was recovered in 2002 during the opening up of the area between the former N and W trial trenches. Both pieces were recovered from what was essentially a thoroughly homogenised soil that had been turned over by bracken roots. Both, therefore, are effectively unstratified.

Description (Illus. 3)

The stone is a flat, oval beach pebble, formed on the local ‘slate’—technically a schist, derived from the Dalriadan schist formation. It is essentially intact, except for the loss of the upper right-hand margin and its lower edge, and measures 180 × 120 × 12 mm in its present state. It was, perhaps, originally up to 30 mm bigger (say, 180 by 150 mm) but in any event it is clear that the slab would have been easily portable and could have been held comfortably in one hand.

Inscribed on the principal face are four human figures (Figures A–D), in profile facing to the right, a boat, a possible letter-form with a terminal serif and a number of miscellaneous other marks. On the reverse—and laid out on a different alignment to the obverse—are a series of letter-forms, a cruciform-pattern formed of four ringed shafts and further miscellaneous ‘doodles’.

Obverse

Figure A

Complete figure in profile but with face turned to viewer and stooped, roughly 65 mm tall. The face is rounded and the eyes and mouth are formed by small cut ovals. There is a rectangular motif on the forehead and, above the figure’s left ear, traces of what may be a cap or similar head-covering. Unlike the other figures on the stone, Figure A does not appear to be dressed in a mail shirt, wearing instead what appears to be a plain skirt or tunic tied at the waist, marked by a simple incised line. Below this there is a prominent hatched band. Across the lower part of the tunic there is a loose curvilinear motif, possibly a chain, which continues to the right to join with a small box-like feature (see below). The legs are cross-hatched, possibly representing cloth leg-bindings, whilst a single incised line immediately to the left of the figure may represent the outline of a cloak or cape. The right arm—or possibly both arms—sweep forward towards Figure B; around and hanging from

the wrist(s) there is a small box-like feature. The 'box' is roughly 6×6 mm, tapering slightly to the top. It is bisected by a horizontal line and, in the centre of the upper panel, there is a prominent point or 'dot'. A possible rope or chain-like device appears to link the figure's hands to the prominent figure, Figure B, to the right.

Figure B

Complete figure, 100 mm tall, with long swept-back, shoulder-length hair, a moustache and whiskers on his chin. Below a prominent forehead there is a triangular-shaped eye-brow over a small wedge-shaped eye. To the left is the ear, defined by a small spiral, whilst to the right is a stubby nose or snout. The neck and body of the figure are covered in a long coat of mail, extending perhaps to the mid-thigh or knee and represented by a series of small circles and scales. The outline of what may be part of the figure's right arm, bent at the elbow, and his hand can also be identified. The leg on the left side of the figure is cross-hatched; the other is partly hatched and partly filled with small circles. This may be a device to represent mail or, possibly, to suggest depth (Tobias Capwell, pers. comm.). A cross-hatched belt or strap hangs between the legs (cf. Figure D).

Figure C

Extant from his feet to just below the shoulders. The figure, like his companion to the left, is dressed in a long coat of mail that extends roughly to the mid-thigh. The mail links or scale in the upper part of the body are aligned horizontally ('c-shaped') whilst those below are arranged vertically ('u-shaped'), suggesting perhaps that the upper part of the body is leaning forwards. The legs appear to have cloth leg-bindings and at the broken edge of the stone there are traces of an extended arm holding what is possibly the shaft of a spear—or perhaps a bow, given the figure's stance and the attendant implications for the alignment of the mail.

Figure D

A fragmentary figure, located at the broken edge of the stone. The left leg is marked by a very thin and carefully incised cross-hatched leg, plus shoe; only part of the figure's right leg can be discerned. Meanwhile, at the top of the legs, there is the very bottom of what is probably a mail shirt; a plain rectangle, similar to the feature seen on Figure B, hangs between the legs.

Boat

Below Figures C and D is a sketch of an oared vessel. It is depicted in profile with an almost vertical stern to the left and, to the right, a sweeping bow. Extending from the stern and lying behind the vessel are what appear to be a pair of steering oars and, at the stern-post itself, there are three or four upright strokes. These may represent mountings for figure-heads or banners or, alternatively, the housing for the mast when un-stepped or not in use (D. Atkinson, pers. comm.). At the bow are two further projections, possibly part of the stem structure or its decoration, whilst towards the centre of the vessel there is what appears to be a square sail or covered space marked by diagonal hatching.

Eleven oars are indicated along the lower or starboard edge of the vessel and a possible twelfth oar—in fact a pair, comprising a nearer, larger example to starboard and a smaller example to port—is shown at the bow in a raised position, possibly depicting the oars in the process of being shipped or deployed. The upper parts of the oars are depicted by a series of simple incised lines; however, the lower parts of the oars and the oar blades are depicted in outline and are deflected towards the stern—a device that was presumably intended to convey the idea of the vessel's movement through the water.

Other marks

- (1) to the left of Figure A there is a small incised cross and triangle motif, 5 mm high and up to 8 mm wide.
- (2) across Figures A and B is an incised 'crossing-out' mark. One stroke extends from near the bottom left-hand edge of the stone and crosses the face of Figure A before terminating in the 'hair' of Figure B. A second, shorter stroke extends from just above Figure A and crosses into the 'neck' of Figure B. At roughly the same point is a third short stroke which extends upwards, terminating just above and to the left of Figure B and next to what appears to be a small incised cross. It is clear, however, that this is an incidental scratch mark rather than a deliberate construction.
- (3) below Figure B are faint traces of two small circles joined by a straight line.
- (4) below the boat there is a prominent right-angled line with a serif, which joins with the arc of a circle where the stone is broken. It may represent the remains of an upright letter 'd' with a cap and wedge-shaped serif. The bowl is lightly hatched.

- (5) the latest marks on the stone comprise a series of probable plough-marks, aligned bottom-left to top-right and cutting across Figures A and B. The marks are up to 40 mm long, 3 mm wide and 1mm deep. Interestingly, all are located on the upper part of the stone, perhaps indicating that the slab was already broken when it acquired this latest group of marks.

Reverse

Located across the upper part of the stone (bottom right on Illus. 3B)—and on a different alignment to the scene on the obverse—are a series of letters. The group comprises a half-uncial *a*, resembling a ligatured form of 'oc', very rounded and identical in form to the 'a's on a piece of dressed slate—inscribed with a series of Gaelic names—that was recovered from the enclosure ditch. To the right there is a capital 'A' and then a 'b' with an open, rounded bowl and a forked serif on the upright.

Faint traces of a possible second group of letters—5 mm tall—lies below. It comprises the same half-uncial 'oc'-*a* form, together with what is possibly the rounded bowl and upright of a letter 'd'. Immediately to the left of this group there are the faint traces of what is possibly a capital 'O' or 'E', roughly 10mm in diameter, with a bar on one side. Above and below the letter-group are two pairs of incised lines, up to 2 mm apart and 25 mm long, as well as a series of curvilinear and other marks.

At the bottom edge of the stone there is a cruciform design formed of four ring-headed shafts—not dissimilar to ringed-pins—laid head-to-head. The three complete shafts are 23–26 mm long and up to 2 mm wide; the ring-heads up to 8 mm across.

Condition & tool-marks

The best-defined elements of the scene on the obverse of the stone comprise Figures B–D, the boat and the lower part of Figure A; on the reverse the clearest elements are the cruciform design and the upper row of letters. The upper part of Figure A and the lower row of letters and the adjacent lines, by contrast, are fainter and less well-preserved. This may represent weathering of the design insofar as Figure A is concerned; for the lower row of letters, on the other hand, their faintness could represent an earlier use of the stone. The

broadly similar alignment of the two rows of letters and the identical 'oc' -a letter-forms, however, would suggest that these inscriptions are roughly contemporary. Moreover, the fact that both sides of the stone would appear to have been inscribed with the same type of implement might also suggest that the slab is essentially a unitary, single-period piece without any significantly later re-use.

Examination of the incised lines under a microscope suggests that the various designs and letter-forms were cut with a pointed tool, roughly 0.5 mm wide at the tip. Examples of wholly metal styli, up to 120 mm long, were recovered from the so-called 'school-house' at the monastic site of Nendrum in County Down (Lawlor 1925, plate XIII). A wooden-shafted example (80 mm long and 10 mm thick) with a pointed iron spike, 1.5 mm in diameter and at least 9 mm long, was recovered from a late first millennium context in Dublin (Lang 1988, fig. 4).

Dating

The principal dating evidence for the stone comes from the letter-forms, essentially a rounded Insular minuscule with a half-uncial 'oc' -a. Although it is difficult to date short fragments of simple, informal lettering, the roundness of the script and the use of the half-uncial 'oc' -a form is suggestive of a date prior to circa AD 800 rather than much after (Katherine Forsyth, pers. comm).

This is reinforced, in a general way, by the spread of radiocarbon dates from the site. With the exception of three dates associated with skeletons from the medieval cemetery, all the radiocarbon dates from the site fall within the period AD 500–1000. In this group, four dates are later, and eight are earlier, than the AD 800 'water-shed'. In any event, a pre-AD 800 chronology would not be incompatible with the specific radiocarbon-dating evidence that indicates that pieces of inscribed slate with the same letter-forms (SF642, inscribed with the names 'Dari' and '-ttagan' and another word, possibly 'Benn' (Gaelic), 'Bene' or 'Benite' (Latin)) were deposited in the upper fill of the enclosure ditch some time in or immediately after AD 780–1000 (1130 ± 35 bp: AA-53163 [GU-10634]).

A pre-AD 800 date might also be indicated by the ringed-pin or cruciform motif on the reverse of the stone (Fanning 1983, 325). Details of the costume and armour could also be accommodated within a similar chronology. On the basis of the mail coats alone, for example,

the slab could conceivably date from any time between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries (Tobias Capwell, pers. comm).

A much later date within this range, however, may be indicated by some of the specific detail of the armour. A thirteenth-century date, for example, would be indicated if the cross-hatching and groups of circles on the legs of Figures B–D are taken to represent mail leg armour or *chausses*. Mail *chausses* were known as early as the eleventh century and some of the earliest representations occur in the Bayeux Tapestry. In Scotland and Scandinavia, however, mail *chausses* do not seem to have come into general circulation until the thirteenth century (Tobias Capwell, pers. comm).

It is not possible to reconcile these conflicting chronologies without making a special pleading for or against the dating of script-forms or types of armour, or abandoning the idea that the carvings on the two sides of the stone are broadly contemporary and were made by the same person using, in all likelihood, the same tool. To get beyond this impasse we have to consider some other aspects of the stone. What did the carver of the sketch—with its almost cartoon-like qualities—intend to show and is there anything else in its design that might throw some light on its story and its date?

Interpretation

One of the keys to understanding the scene is the distinction that the carver makes between the mail-suited and presumably armed figures (Figures B–D) to the right and the armour-less, unarmed figure (Figure A) to the left. These differences are emphasised by the erect, 'head-up' and dominant stance of the former, and the slightness, stooped and 'head-down' form of the latter. The group to the right are clearly identifiable as warriors and the event being depicted looks very much like slave-raiding or a hostage-taking, but what particular type of non-combatant is intended by the figure to the left? The slightness of Figure A may suggest a youth or possibly an ecclesiastical figure. Central to this interpretation is the identification of the box- or 'hand-bag'-like feature that is suspended from the figure's wrists.

The feature could represent a padlock or shackle—although there seems to be little to stop the figure from slipping his hands out of the device. Significantly, perhaps, the object appears to be attached to Figure A himself—by means of a chain at its bottom left-hand corner—rather

than to the character to the right, which might be expected if the box-like feature were a restraining device. It may be the case that Figure B is leading Figure A by a rope that is slung over his right-shoulder—hence the bent arm and the small raised hand or fist—or that Figure A is attached by a rope or chain that extends from the bottom of Figure B's mail-shirt. Neither, unfortunately, is entirely clear. What is clear, however, is that the 'hand-bag' belongs with Figure A and there is the implication—in its physical attachment—that it was an item of some importance. Furthermore, the fact that the person who incised these lines has even bothered to include it in the scene might suggest that the object 'defines' its carrier in the same way that the spear or bow, together with the mail-shirts, define the other members in the story.

Alternative interpretations of the 'hand-bag' place it firmly in an ecclesiastical context. It could, for example, represent a book-satchel. A leather example, previously thought to be a leather jerkin, has recently been recognised among the finds from Loch Glashan crannog (Crone & Campbell 2005, 81–5). Meanwhile, pictorial representations are known from Papil and Bressay in Shetland (e.g. Wainwright 1962, Plates XII & XIII), as well as from elsewhere (Meehan 2005). It is clear, however, from these examples that the satchels were carried over the shoulder and were significantly larger than the Inchmarnock 'hand-bag'.

Its size and the fact that it is shown suspended from the figure's wrists might suggest that the feature is a bell. Examples of small Celtic bells and bell-shrines are, of course, well-known (Bourke 1980; 1983). Alternatively—given its slightly tapered form—could it represent our first contemporary depiction of a house-shaped shrine or reliquary? Many examples are known from Ireland and the Continent, as well as from Scotland and they are one of the defining artefacts of the Gaelic ecclesiastical cultural milieu. They take the form of small models of hip-roofed buildings with prominent gable finials and applied metal decoration, occasionally with inlaid precious stones and enamel. As has long been noted, these house-shaped shrines bear a strong resemblance to the depiction of the Temple of Jerusalem in the eighth-century *Book of Kells* (f.202V), to the finials of ninth- and tenth-century sculptured Irish high crosses and to some surviving Irish stone oratories (Ryan 1989, 129). The Inchmarnock example lacks any obvious finials. The slight taper on the upper panel, however, may reflect a hip-roofed structure whilst the central point on the same field may represent an applied decoration or mount.

If the story, then, is one involving slave-raiding or hostage-taking—and the capture of an ecclesiastical figure by a group of armed and sea-going warriors—what would be the most likely historical context?

Historical context

In light of the recurring eighth- or ninth-century dates that can be inferred on the basis of the palaeography, or the similar date range that might apply to the chronology of house-shaped shrines, or indeed the radiocarbon dates from the site itself which span the last quarter of the first millennium, there is a very obvious temptation to regard this image as a raiding party by a group of wild-haired Viking warriors. It is, of course, an old image and one that harks back to the 'Doomsday scene' on the Lindisfarne Stone (conveniently in Richards 1991, Fig. 3) and its group of axe- and sword-wielding warriors—usually identified as those same heathen warriors who, as recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for 793, brought 'rapine and slaughter' to the monastery of Lindisfarne.

References in the *Annals of Ulster* bear witness to the Vikings' propensity for slave-raiding and the role of Scandinavian Dublin in the slave trade with Islam has been explored in outline by Smyth (1977, 154–68). Large numbers of English, British and Pictish captives, for example, were off-loaded by the Vikings on the markets of Dublin in 871 (AU—s.a. 870). Elsewhere, there are references to hostage-taking, in return for ransom: Maelcobho, abbot of Armagh, for example, was captured in 879 (AU—s.a. 878); Muirchertach, king of the North Uí Néill was seized in 939 (AU—s.a. 938). Such a scenario would fit with the image on the Inchmarnock slab. It would also sit more comfortably with the most recent reassessments of Viking colonial settlement (Smith 2001; Kruse 2005) which, contrary to the 'peaceful integration' or 'empty islands' ideas that were advocated in the 1970s, emphasise the inherent violence that must have gone hand in hand with the seizure of new lands. As Alfred Smyth (1984, 146) commented over twenty years ago, 'all the evidence suggests that...these invaders...were instantly conspicuous to Scots, English and Irish alike, for their brutality and heathenism'.

On the other hand, of course, as A. T. Lucas reminds us in his paper concerning the plundering and burning of churches in Ireland,

in the period seventh—sixteenth centuries, this was by no means an exclusively Viking activity (Lucas 1967). Indeed, this is very much the historical context that lay behind the *Cain Adomnáin* (Adomnan's Law/Law of the Innocents) which was promulgated at the Synod of Birr, in County Offaly, in 697 and which had the objective of protecting women and children, as well as men in holy orders and religious communities, against acts of violence in times of war and peace. And possibly this is what the Inchmarnock slab shows—conflict between competing Dalriadan kinships, or perhaps a border raid by their near neighbours, the Britons of Strathclyde. Alternatively, however, we should not ignore the possibility that the image on the stone could relate to something much earlier; something like, for example, the traditional account of St Patrick's own capture and subsequent enslavement. Admittedly, this would be a 'corrupted' image of the event—as Patrick, although a Christian, did not become a true believer until after he reached Ireland—and the presence of the house-shaped reliquary would clearly be both anachronistic as well as technically inappropriate. However, it is not difficult to see how such a story—involving, as it did, the enslavement of Christians by pagans—could have been given a contemporary gloss.

Image and Imagination

The idea of the 'hostage' and the idea of the raiding party is a convenient image, in no small part because it covers conceptually familiar territory. Although the pictorial representation may be unique, its content on the other hand has been described in writing or told in stories many times before. But is the image too convenient and too accommodating to our collective imagination? Are we, in other words, only seeing what we expect to see?

An alternative view—and I am extremely grateful to Katherine Forsyth for suggesting this as a possibility—is to consider whether the image is describing something quite different—with the armed warriors as protectors, not pirates, and with the whole scene describing the departure on circuit of the ecclesiastical figure and the reliquary. As she has suggested, this would have been a major event in the life of an island monastery like Inchmarnock (Katherine Forsyth, pers. comm).

Certainly, there is little evidence for Figure A having been bound in any way and, as noted above, the evidence for a rope slung over the

right-shoulder of Figure B, or for a rope or chain extending from the bottom of Figure B's mail-shirt is poorly defined. Furthermore, given the attention to detail that is present elsewhere on the slab, it could be argued that we might have reasonably expected to see Figure A bound in neck-chains or leg-irons or some such similar device. We might also add that the way in which the reliquary is held is more suggestive of a ritual procession than an everyday story of ecclesiastical folk and their troublesome neighbours.

Against the idea of the 'ecclesiastical relic circuit', however, we would have to offer two, not-unrelated observations. One concerns the stooped posture of Figure A, his relative size and the subservient position that he adopts in relation to Figure B. The second concerns the central role that is accorded to Figure B and the way in which he—and not Figure A, despite his reliquary—dominates the scene as the largest character and focal point of the image. One might wonder, for example, why the ecclesiastical figure was not given this position and size on the stone.

Conclusions

The content of the scene is clear, insofar as it comprises three armed warriors, a boat and an ecclesiastical figure holding what is almost certainly our earliest depiction of a house-shaped shrine. The narrative display, however, is perhaps less clear than originally thought.

There is the conceptually familiar 'hostage-taking' involving the seizure of an ecclesiastical figure by a group of armed and sea borne warriors. On the other hand, there is the idea of the warriors as protectors of the church. Clearly, such a role existed and territorial rights of lordship—including protection of one's ecclesiastical assets, particularly the church's relics—would have been jealously guarded. The question, however, is whether such a central and dominating role would have ever been assigned to the warrior rather than the relic itself?

The scene may represent a contemporary display of a contemporary event or one that is historical. In either event, however, it is likely that the 'display-forms'—the nature of the dress and the type of boat adopted—are local, based on types that would have been familiar to the scene's creator.

The purpose of the stone is less clear but its very form—as a simple water-worn pebble that was picked up off the beach—suggests that it was a piece of ephemera. And the most likely functional context for the

stone—given the evidence elsewhere on the site for training and instruction—is as a teaching aid for story-telling. Clearly, we cannot know what that story may have been; nor can we know for sure the ethnicity of the wild-haired warriors. But as an image of its time—whether they are to be seen as ‘pirates’ or ‘protectors’—it encapsulates the uncertainties and the general threat of violence that must have sometimes seemed ever-present to island communities in and around the Firth of Clyde in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Acknowledgements

The excavation at the church forms part of a broader study of the archaeology and history of the island from the earliest times down to the Improvements of the late eighteenth century. The Project is being undertaken on behalf of Sir Robert Smith, the island’s owner. Publication of the project is in hand for 2007.

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ANGLO-SAXON INSCRIPTIONS FOUND OUTSIDE THE BRITISH ISLES

Elisabeth Okasha

The inscriptions under discussion in this paper are those which can be described as 'Anglo-Saxon' but which were not found within the British Isles. Admittedly, neither were some of these inscriptions found in the area encompassed by the term 'North Sea World'. However, Barbara Crawford's interests and enthusiasms have never been closely confined by geography, modern or medieval. This paper is offered to her in the hope that she will find it of interest, and as a token of gratitude for very many years of friendship, both academic and personal.

The thirteen inscriptions discussed in this paper are those discovered outside the British Isles which are certainly Anglo-Saxon: that is, they all date from *c.* 600 AD to *c.* 1100 AD and can be demonstrated to be of Anglo-Saxon workmanship. The evidence may take the form of the text's being in Old English and/or carved in Anglo-Saxon runes, or of the text's being in Latin but forming an integral part of an object of Anglo-Saxon manufacture. Certain inscriptions are deliberately excluded, notably coins and coin jewellery which more properly form part of numismatic study. The inscriptions are all portable and were all found outside these islands, that is, outside England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The countries in which they were found comprise modern-day Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Norway and Sweden.

Three main questions, or groups of questions, are discussed in this paper. The first is: how did these Anglo-Saxon inscriptions come to be found beyond the bounds of these islands? Were they manufactured abroad by Anglo-Saxons, or were they made in Anglo-Saxon England and then carried to other countries? The second question concerns their survival: in general, are Anglo-Saxon inscribed objects more, or less, likely to have survived outside these islands than within them? The third question is related to the content of the texts. There is a rather larger percentage of religious objects than might have been expected. Is this related to the objects' location, or to their survival, or to both?

Whereas the British Isles can be considered as some sort of an entity in the early Middle Ages, this does not apply to modern land boundaries on the continent. Nevertheless, for convenience, the thirteen inscriptions are arranged here alphabetically by modern country and then by place of finding. In each case the following information is given: the type of object, its current location/owner, its date range, and one published reference where the object is illustrated. This is followed by the inscribed text, transliterated into words and then translated. Four of the objects, Auzon, Gargano, Mortain and Rome 3, have both runic and non-runic texts; two have only runic texts, Gandersheim and Rome 2; the remainder have only non-runic texts.

Belgium

Brussels

Wooden reliquary cross; Cathedral of S. Michel; 10th or 11th century; Okasha 1971, 57–8 and plate 17

agnus di, ‘lamb of God’; + *drahmal me worhte*, ‘+ Drahmal made me’; + *rod is min nama geo ic ricne cyning bær byfigynde blode bestemed*, ‘+ Cross is my name; formerly, trembling and drenched with blood, I bore the mighty king’; *þas rode het æþlmaer wyrican 7 æðelwold hys berop[er] criste to lofe for ælfrices sawle hyra beropor*, ‘Aethelmaer, and Athelwold his brother, ordered this cross to be made as praise to Christ and for the soul of Aelfric their brother’

France

Auzon

Whale-bone casket; British Museum, London, M&LA 1867, 1–20 (right-hand side in Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence); 8th century; Okasha 1971, 50–51 and plate 6

runic texts on four faces and one on fifth face (back) which is partly runic, partly non-runic; front: *hronæs ban fisc flodu ahof on fergenberig warþ gasric grorn þær he on greut giswom mægi*, ‘whale’s bone; the fish beat up the

sea(s) on to the mountainous cliff; the king of terror became sad when he swam on to the shingle; magi'; lid: *ægili*, 'Ægil'; left side: *romwalus and reumwalus twoegen gibroþer afoeddæ hie wylif in romæcæstri oplæ unneg*, 'Romulus and Remus, two brothers, a she-wolf fed them in Rome, far from their native land'; right side: *risci bita wudu*, 'rush; biter; wood'; *her hos sitip on harmberga agl[.] drigip swa hiræ ertae gisgraf sarden sorga and sefa torna*, 'Here Hos sits on the sorrow-mound; she suffers distress as Ertæ had imposed it on her, a wretched den of sorrows and of torments of mind'; back: *dom gisl*, 'judgement; hostage'; *her fegtaþ titus end giuþeasu*, 'here fight Titus and the Jews'; non-runic and runic: *hic fugiant hierusalim afitatores*, 'here the inhabitants flee from Jerusalem'.

Mortain

Wooden and gilded copper reliquary; M le Maire et la Ville de Mortain (Manche); probably 8th century; Okasha 1971, 102 and plate 93

scs mih scs gab, 'St Michael, St Gabriel'; runic text: + *good helpe æadan þiiosne cūismeel gewarahtæ*, '+ may God help Aeda (who) made this ?reliquary'

Paris

Wooden and porphyry altar; Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris; probably late 10th or 11th century; Okasha 1983, 95–6 and plate VIII

+ *discipvlvs plorat raphael quem semp adorat* +, '+ the disciple mourns him whom Raphael always worships +; -*nitrix meret gabriel cvi scs adheret* [+], probably starting [+ *ge*]nitrix, '[+ the mother] mourns, to whom the holy Gabriel cleaves'; other texts not legible

Germany

Aachen

Leather decorated sheath; Cathedral Treasury, Aachen; probably 11th century; Okasha 1992, 40–41 and plate Ia

+ *byrhtsige mec f[e]cið*, '+ Byrhtsige made me'

Gandersheim

Whale-bone casket; Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, Braunschweig, inv. no. MA58; late 8th century, although text might be a later addition; Webster and Backhouse 1991, 177–9 and plates

text largely uninterpreted but may contain *þūs*, ‘this’ and *līn*, ‘linen’

Cologne

Silver mount of ivory crozier head; Cathedral Treasury, Cologne; 11th century; Okasha 1992, 43–4 and plate IIa

+ *reliqv[ie s]ce marie et sci cristofori*, ‘+ the relics of St Mary and St Christopher’

*Italy**Gargano*

Graffiti in church of St Michael, Monte Sant’ Angelo; late 7th to mid 9th century; Derolez and Schwab 1983, 97–130 and figs 7–13; Derolez and Schwab 1994, 18–19 and fig

five runic personal names: *wigfus*, ‘Wigfus’; *herræd*, ‘Hereraed’; *herebereht*, ‘Herebeorht’; *s mægu-* (unintelligible); *leofwini* ‘Leofwine’; non-runic text: *ead[r]hid saxs[o] v h*, possibly to be expanded *v(ir) h(onestus)*, ‘Eadræd the Saxon, a good man’

Rome 1

Two silver hooked tags with one continuous text; Museo Nazionale, Rome; 10th century; Okasha 1992, 53 and plates VIa, b

+ *domno marino papa* +, ‘+ to Lord Pope Marinus +’

Rome 2

Bronze pot fragment; Chicago, exact location uncertain (Page 1999, 36–7); date uncertain; if genuine, possibly 9th century; Franzén 1986, 101–8 and plate

part of runic alphabet: *a b c d e f j l m n k l m n o p q r s t u x*

Rome 3

Graffiti in Cimitero di Commodilla; late 7th to early 9th century; Derolez 1987, 14–15 and fig.

runic name *eadbald*, ‘Eadbald’; several possible non-runic names: *cedualdo* *diac* ‘Cedweald the deacon’, and perhaps *cedilomi*, *ceude-*, and *uuernoð*

Norway

Trondheim

Leather sheath; Vitenskapsmuseet, University of Trondheim, no. T 5918; probably 11th century; Okasha 1992, 55–6 and plate VIIc

+ *-ic me [f]ec*, ‘+ [-]ic made me’

Sweden

Lund

Wooden box-lid; Kulturen, Lund, no. KM 53436:1125; 11th century; Okasha 1992, 51 and plate IVd

leo[f]win[e me f]-, possibly to be completed *fecit*, ‘Leofwine made me’

The circumstances under which these thirteen inscriptions were found differ quite considerably, as do the dates at which they were found or first mentioned. The earliest to have been recorded was the Brussels cross which was deposited in the church of SS Michael and Gudule in Brussels in 1650. There are several conflicting theories, but no reliable evidence, as to its earlier history, although it is possible that it is to be identified with a relic of the True Cross recorded in Tiel in 1315; these theories are discussed by d’Ardenne (1939, 152–8) and summarised in Backhouse *et al.* 1984, 92.

There is then a gap of almost two centuries before the finding of the Auzon casket in private possession in Auzon, Haute-Loire, early in the nineteenth century. For its subsequent history, see Napier 1901, 362–4, and Page 1994, 178. In 1815 the Gandersheim casket was first recorded when it entered the Braunschweig ducal collection, following the secularisation of the abbey. From the second half of the nineteenth

century a number of the inscriptions were found. The Cologne crozier head was first recorded in Deutz parish church in 1856. In 1860 the sheath from Aachen is first mentioned in Aachen Cathedral Treasury, but nothing is known of its previous history. The same is true of the Mortain casket which was first noted in Mortain collegial church in 1864. In 1886, the Musée de Cluny in Paris acquired the Paris altar from the sale of the Stein Collection.

A few of the inscriptions were found during excavation. The pair of hooked tags (Rome 1) were found in 1883 with a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins during excavation in the Forum. The Trondheim sheath was found during excavation on the site of the Freemasons' Lodge in Trondheim in 1899. The Lund box was discovered in kv Fargaren 22, Lund, during excavations there in 1961. Also in the last century, but not during excavation, were first recorded the other inscriptions from Italy. The bronze pot fragment Rome 2 was purchased in Rome some time before 1919, while the graffiti at Gargano and Rome (Rome 3) were discovered in situ at various dates in the twentieth century.

When we come to consider the question of whether these thirteen objects were manufactured abroad by Anglo-Saxons or were made in Anglo-Saxon England and then carried abroad, it is necessary to separate the objects. The two groups of graffiti, Gargano and Rome 3, were obviously inscribed in situ in Italy, presumably by, or commissioned by, visiting Anglo-Saxons. On the other hand, those artefacts that contain inscriptions wholly or partly in Anglo-Saxon runes, that is, Auzon, Gandersheim, Mortain and Rome 2, could be considered more likely to have been made inside Anglo-Saxon England. The reason for this is that Anglo-Saxon runes were presumably not widely legible outside these islands. (How far they were widely legible inside Anglo-Saxon England is of course also open to question). However, in the light of the runic graffiti in Italy, we cannot rule out the notion of someone with runic knowledge travelling abroad and inscribing the runic texts on these objects while there. The Old English text on the Auzon casket is written in a Northumbrian or Mercian dialect, which suggests, though does not prove, a north of England provenance for its manufacture. The casket's iconographic programme, and its mixture of Old English and Latin, as well as two scripts in the texts, are likely to have emanated from a learned community. Webster and Backhouse suggest that in the eighth or ninth century, this is likely to have been a 'monastic milieu' such as Lindisfarne, Monkwearmouth/Jarrow, or Ripon (Webster and Backhouse 1991, 103).

Under what circumstances, and when, might these four objects have found their way to the continent? The short answer is that it is hard to be certain. The Auzon casket is certainly a prestigious and eye-catching object, and it might have been exported at any time. Rome 2, however, is neither prestigious nor eye-catching and it is hard to find a context for its export. Indeed Franzén points out that this sort of bronze urn was common in Italy in the later Roman period (Franzén 1986, 101). She suggests that the evidence is more in favour of its having been inscribed on the continent than in England; in view of its alphabetic runic text, this might possibly not even have been by an Anglo-Saxon (Franzén 1986, 105–7).

However, in the case of the export of the other two objects, some known points of contact may be suggestive. For example, the Gandersheim casket could have reached Germany in the tenth century, due to the close links that existed between King Athelstan and the Saxon court (Webster and Backhouse 1991, 178). In the case of the Mortain casket, as Page remarks, it is not a particularly impressive piece and its value to the French at any historical period is not easy to discern (Page 1994, 178). However, it is a religious object, possibly a reliquary or a pyx, which may have given it added value. The Count of Mortain held considerable lands in Yorkshire *TRE* (Faull and Stinson 1986, *Domesday Book* ff 305b–308c), continuing the pre-Conquest tradition of relationship between Normandy and Anglo-Saxon England. The Mortain casket might well have been exported there in pre-Conquest, or early post-Conquest, times.

The remaining seven objects divide into a secular and a religious group. The secular objects are the two sheaths for angle-backed weapons, Aachen and Trondheim, and the Lund box lid. The religious objects are those found in Brussels, Cologne, Paris and Rome 1. In the case of the two sheaths, although certainty is not possible, common-sense suggests that they might well have been carried abroad from Anglo-Saxon England while still in use. What could be easier in the heat of a fight, or even while eating, walking or sleeping, than to lose such a sheath? The Lund box-lid was found in an archaeological context likely to date from *c.* 1025 to 1050. It was discovered on a slope leading to a well, in a position which suggested to the excavators that it had been deposited while the well was still in use (Okasha 1984, 181). If the box was made in Anglo-Saxon England, it must have been exported shortly afterwards. However it could alternatively have been made by an Anglo-Saxon living and working in or near Lund.

The pair of hooked tags from Rome contain between them the name of a pope, probably that of Pope Marinus II, AD 942–6, and were found with a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins, which had certainly been brought from Anglo-Saxon England. It has been suggested that the tags formed the fastenings for a purse containing an English offering to the papacy (Graham-Campbell and Okasha 1991, 225, 228). It therefore seems likely that they were deliberately made in Anglo-Saxon England with the intention of exporting them. They may indeed have been specifically commissioned by royal or ecclesiastical command.

In the case of the Brussels cross, we are told the name of the artisan who made it, Drahmál. This name is not otherwise recorded, but is clearly not an Old English name. It could be of Scandinavian or Continental Germanic origin. While a non-Anglo-Saxon artisan does not prove where the cross was made, it does suggest that a continental place of manufacture is not improbable. On the other hand, the names of the commissioners and the commemorated, Aethelmaer, Athelwold and Aelfric, are all recorded Anglo-Saxon names. Were the three brothers travelling on the continent when one of them died? In this case they could have commissioned a local man to make the cross. Or was Drahmál working in Anglo-Saxon England when he was given the commission, and the fact that the cross was subsequently taken abroad is fortuitous? It is hard to be certain.

The other objects whose texts name their makers are Aachen, Lund, Mortain and Trondheim. The name on the Trondheim sheath is not now legible, but the other three each contain an Old English artisan's name, each of which is recorded elsewhere. They are respectively Byrhtsige, Leofwine and Aeda. The evidence from these names may support the suggestions made above on different grounds, that these three objects were made in England and then taken abroad.

The silver mount of the Cologne crozier head is the part that contains the text. This is generally accepted to be of Anglo-Saxon workmanship, even though the ivory part of the crozier may well be of continental origin. It is possible that the silver mount was executed in England and exported shortly afterwards. It is probably more likely, however, that it was made by an Anglo-Saxon artisan working around Deutz and Cologne, perhaps at the same centre where the ivory-worker made the rest of the crozier-head. The Paris altar is certainly all of Anglo-Saxon workmanship and is of high quality. Such a prestigious liturgical object would no doubt have been highly valued both in England and in France. In these circumstances, it is impossible to say when it is most likely to have reached the continent.

The answer to the first question posed above is, in short, that some of the objects are likely to have been made in Anglo-Saxon England and then exported, while some may well have emanated from Anglo-Saxons living or visiting the continent. In the latter group are the graffiti in Gargano and Rome (Rome 3), the bronze pot fragment Rome 2, and the Cologne crozier head; other possible additions to this group are the Brussels cross and the Lund box lid. In the former group, some of the objects made in Anglo-Saxon England were likely to have been exported soon after their manufacture. This is certainly so with the hooked tags, Rome 1, and is fairly certain with the Aachen and Trondheim sheaths. With the other objects, Auzon, Gandersheim, Mortain and Paris, it is quite uncertain when these objects were moved from England to the continent.

The second question concerns the survival of Anglo-Saxon inscribed objects once they had reached the continent. It is sometimes said that the Viking raids caused the loss or mutilation of many Anglo-Saxon manuscripts and artefacts, a fate which could have been avoided had these objects already been exported abroad. This may well be true of some early pieces. Indeed, it could have had a bearing in the cases of those objects dating from the eighth or ninth centuries, Auzon, Gandersheim, Mortain and Rome 2, depending on when they first reached the continent. It is possible to argue that an early export from England to the continent would have aided their survival, although in the case of Rome 2 its survival is only as a fragment. However, the only evidence that can be suggested about the date of export of Auzon, Gandersheim and Mortain points to the tenth century or later when the Viking raids were largely in the past.

The Vikings certainly do not form a relevant argument when it comes to objects whose date of manufacture is likely to be the tenth or eleventh centuries. From the Norman Conquest to the end of the Middle Ages, it is hard to be sure whether England or the continent would have provided a safer home for Anglo-Saxon inscribed objects. However, after the end of the medieval period, the Reformation and Dissolution of the monasteries become of some relevance. Religious, and in particular liturgical, objects might indeed have been considerably safer in continental rather than in English churches and monasteries at this period. This argument also applies to the preservation of the inscriptions at Gargano and Rome 3.

The artefacts which were first recorded inside religious buildings are those from Aachen, Brussels, Cologne and Mortain. The Aachen sheath and the Cologne crozier head are indeed preserved in Cathedral

treasuries, and the Brussels cross is venerated in Brussels Cathedral. As indicated above, it is not at all clear when they first entered these buildings but, had it been in early times, this would undoubtedly have aided their survival. Some other objects are first recorded in private possession, Auzon, Gandersheim, Paris and Rome 2. It is possible that they too were therefore kept more safely than might have been possible in England. The objects from Lund, Rome 1 and Trondheim were all found in the last two centuries during excavation. While the Lund box lid may well have been deposited there shortly after its manufacture, it is quite unclear when, and why, the others came to be in the exact positions where they were found.

Backhouse says of the Paris altar that it is: 'one of the very few surviving pieces of high-quality Late Saxon liturgical equipment' (Backhouse *et al.* 1984, 92). Although the evidence from these inscribed objects is certainly not conclusive, it may be that where objects were taken to the continent early enough, that this might indeed have aided their survival into modern times. This could certainly help to explain the comparative dearth of Anglo-Saxon liturgical objects, inscribed or uninscribed, most of which presumably did not leave these islands.

The third question posed at the start of this paper was why so many of the Anglo-Saxon inscribed objects found on the continent are religious items. Most Anglo-Saxon inscribed portable objects are not explicitly ecclesiastical, the largest groups comprising weapons and secular jewellery. Yet of the thirteen found on the continent, only two are certainly secular, the sheaths from Aachen and Trondheim, although it is probable that Rome 2, and possible that the Lund box lid, were so also.

One reason for this may be related to the question of survival discussed above. Ecclesiastical items such as portable altars, crozier heads and pyxes are clearly more likely to be preserved in churches and church treasuries than secular items. On the other hand, the leather sheath from Aachen no doubt also survived due to its being placed in the Cathedral treasury.

Another reason may be related to the question of how and why the objects reached the continent in the first place. Many of the objects could have been exported from Anglo-Saxon England by people travelling to or towards Rome, although not presumably those artefacts found in Scandinavia. The purse tags, Rome 1, were no doubt deliberately exported to Rome as payment to the Holy See and brought there

by papal envoys. Other travellers might well have included pilgrims on their way to Rome or to the Holy Land. Anglo-Saxon historical manuscripts document many such pilgrimages made by Anglo-Saxons of various social classes. The Brussels cross (if it was manufactured in Anglo-Saxon England), the Paris portable altar, the three caskets that could have been used for the Host or had other ecclesiastical functions, seem exactly the sorts of objects that pilgrims might carry with them. Even more mundane articles like the Aachen sheath could well have been in the possession of a pilgrim.

Allied to these are the graffiti Gargano and Rome 3 which, on the evidence of where they are inscribed, are usually assumed to be the work of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims. Anglo-Saxon pilgrimages to Rome are of course well recorded. As Derolez and Schwab point out, the presence of Anglo-Saxons at Gargano may be partly explained in terms of its shrine to St Michael, and partly because it was on a route from Rome to the Holy Land. This pilgrimage route, and its known associations with travellers from Anglo-Saxon England, is discussed in detail by Derolez and Schwab (1983, 109–12).

The thirteen Anglo-Saxon inscriptions discussed in this paper are not, of course, the only objects from Anglo-Saxon England that made their way to the continent. The best-known by far is neither a small portable inscription, nor graffiti, but one of the four large Anglo-Saxon manuscripts containing Old English texts, the so-called Vercelli Book, which remains in Vercelli in Italy where it was found. The questions posed at the beginning of this paper about these inscribed objects concerned their places of manufacture, their survival and their possible links with Anglo-Saxon pilgrims. Discussion of these questions has clearly not yielded definitive answers but, it may be hoped, some suggestive ideas about the cultural links that existed between Anglo-Saxon England and its continental neighbours.

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FROM SCOTLAND TO NORMANDY: THE CELTIC SEA ROUTE OF THE VIKINGS

Élisabeth Ridel

Introduction

The origins of the Vikings who settled in Normandy are, today, well known to historians. Undoubtedly a majority of these invaders were Danish, but a great contingent of them was more specifically Anglo-Danish. Documentary, literary, onomastic and lexical sources all converge on this very point. Indeed, many Vikings did not come directly from Scandinavia, but from their colonies in England whence it would have been easier to reach what would eventually become Normandy. This Anglo-Scandinavian influx, which continued up to the eleventh century, contributed greatly to the special cultural complexion of the Viking settlement of Normandy.

However, the Vikings also followed another sea route to the coast of France, one which was less direct and, because of this, certainly less used. This route belonged to the Norwegians who, from their settlements in Scotland and Ireland, sailed either directly to Brittany or Aquitaine, or indirectly (because the Cornish peninsula presents an obvious obstacle) to the Channel Islands and the coast of The Cotentin (Normandy). The late Lucien Musset clearly demonstrated, a little over thirty years ago, the presence in West Normandy of Celtic anthroponyms associated with Viking settlements (Musset [1978] 1997). In light of this tribute to Barbara Crawford, it would be good to see his work updated. It would have to be synthesised, for the reader's benefit, and completed with scattered data that would not only have to be collated, but also refreshed by more recent research.

Some Celtic and Celto-Scandinavian Anthroponyms in West Normandy

Lucien Musset's study of attested Celtic anthroponyms in the Normandy of the eleventh and twelfth centuries uncovered at least six names of

people whose Irish or Scottish origins were certain.¹ Here follows a brief list:

The name *Beccán*, found in Lancashire and Iceland in a definite Norwegian context, came to Normandy in the twelfth century through two individuals whose family settled in Condé-sur-Noireau in the department of Calvados. The name *Donecan*, Latinized into *Donecannus*, was especially well distributed in West Normandy and corresponds to the Old Irish *Donchad* and to the Scottish name *Duncan*. Documented in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, it belonged to ten individuals of whom some may well have been of the same family. Another example, *Murdac*, was also well represented in West Normandy as early as the eleventh century and comes from the Old Irish *Muiredach*. Yet another, *Patric*, comes from the well-known Irish name *Pátraic*. But the most famous Irish anthroponym in Normandy is undoubtedly *Níall*, for it is the origin of *Néel*, the family name of the viscounts of The Cotentin. Adopted by the Scandinavians themselves in the form *Njáll*, it was exported as far afield as Iceland, where it succeeded in establishing itself in local usage. In Normandy it appeared in the Latinized forms *Niellus* (whence the modern form *Néel*) and *Nigellus*. The first viscount of The Cotentin is mentioned in an original act dating from the period 1013–20 as *Nielli vicecomitis*. It is clear that the popularity of this name is due to its hereditary character, becoming common in the family of the viscounts during the eleventh century.

Even more revealing of the Celto-Norwegian presence in West Normandy are the place-names incorporating Celtic anthroponyms. Formed using the element *-ville*, from the Latin *villa*, meaning ‘rural estate’, or a Scandinavian noun, these primary formations date from the time of the Vikings.² Two toponyms with *-ville* give the name of a Celtic person: the first, *la rue Doncanville* in the Saire Valley (*Donecanvilla*, c. 1150–60), contains the recognizable anthroponym *Donchad*, and the second, *Digulleville* in La Hague (*Deguillevilla*, c. 1200), is the only example in Normandy of the Irish name *Dicuil*. It is important to note that

¹ Musset [1978] 1997, 281–291. I have not retained the anthroponym *Galeman*, whose Celtic origin is not certain, and *Kined*, whose relation with the toponyms *Quinéville* and *Quinémaire* remains doubtful.

² Let us not forget that toponyms ending in *-ville* in Normandy, formed between the eighth and twelfth centuries, were often compounds containing a Scandinavian personal name. Whilst this type of toponymic compound already existed before the arrival of the Vikings, their settling in Neustria would have made the practice widespread through the drafting of property statements or other forms of deed that indicated the name of the new owners.

these toponyms, located in the most Scandinavian-influenced regions of Normandy, have their equivalent in the Norwegian colonies of the North Atlantic. In the Faroe Islands there is a bay and a headland that incorporate the name *Donchad* (*Dungansvík* and *Dungansnes*) and in Iceland there is a promontory that has conserved the name *Dicuill* (*Digulstunga*). A final toponym, this time of completely Scandinavian composition and incorporating the name *Níall*, is *Néhou* (*Neahou*, *Nigellihulmus*, twelfth century) whose generic element comes from the Old Scandinavian *holmr*, ‘islet, land surrounded by water’ (Latinized *hulmus*).

These Celtic anthroponyms have been re-examined more recently by Gillian Fellows-Jensen, who proposed a more precise geographical origin:

Although all these personal names may be present in Irish sources, *Duncan* and *Murdac* are typically Scottish, whereas *Beccán*, *Níal* and *Patric* are also found in the literary accounts of medieval Iceland, where they sometimes belong to characters who were supposed to have reached the northern isle from the Hebrides (1994, 100).

Two anthroponyms, long ago uncovered by Jean Adigard des Gautries in his famous thesis on the Scandinavian names of people in Normandy, do confirm links between Scotland and West Normandy.³ Originally, these were Scandinavian names, but they were moulded in a Celtic environment. *Bretakolllr*, comprising *Bretar*, ‘Breton’ and *kolllr*, ‘skull, head’, was at first a nickname created by the Scandinavians to designate someone of Celtic origin. It has been found in Normandy in the place-name *Brectouville* (*Britecolvilla*, 1159). As for *Sumarliði*, it was well known in the Norse settlements of Scotland; its presence in the ninth century has been attested and it was widespread in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It was also present in Normandy in the compound toponym *Summerleevilla* (c. 1210), a place-name now lost from the village of Saint-Germain-le-Gaillard.

Finally, let us add to this inventory the name of the Irish saint *Columba*, romanized as a feminine noun *Colombe* and in all likelihood the origin of the French *Sainte-Colombe*, to whom three parishes are dedicated in West Normandy. Recent research has shown a link between these parishes and the *Néel* family, viscounts of The Cotentin, who controlled the district (Van Torhout 2006, 32–33). Taking into account the fact that St Columba was himself born of the Irish royal family of Níall

³ Adigard des Gautries 1954, 96–97, 392 (Brectouville), 141–142, 417 (Summerleeville).

(the *Ui Néill*), one can understand better why he is so closely associated with the Cotentin family of Néel. This link is a precious clue as to the social origins of several Norwegians who participated in the Scandinavian colonization of Normandy. As Lucien Musset already suggested in 1978, this was a 'ruling class, lacking any appreciable peasant element'.⁴

In total, eight names, plus that of an Irish saint (see Illus. 5): it is not much, it must be said, but it is sufficient to lend weight to the supposition that during the Viking period there existed a flow of Scandinavian immigration into West Normandy from Scotland and Ireland. Moreover, it is significant that certain bearers of Celtic names were closely related to bearers of purely Scandinavian names (*ibid.* 288).

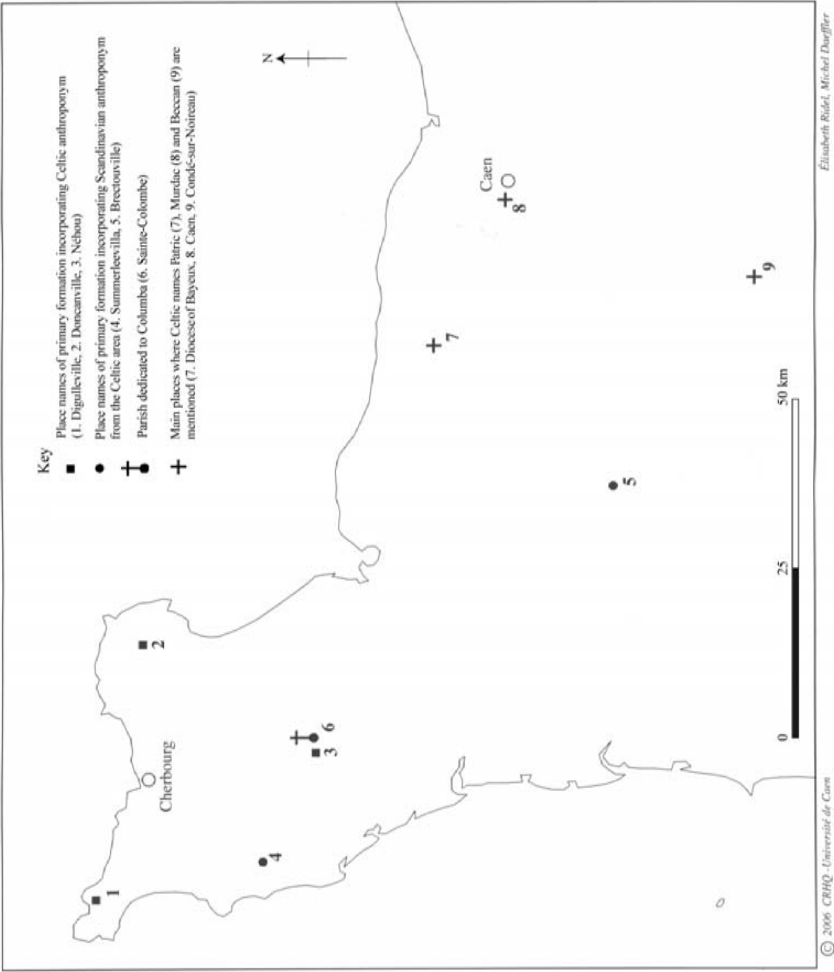
Some Historical and Archaeological Elements

Unfortunately we do not possess documentary sources that indicate explicitly an arrival of Vikings in Normandy from the Irish Sea. We must content ourselves with a more general approach and analyse the Viking raids throughout the Frankish territory. Above all, it is necessary to go back in time, to well before the Viking period, in order to uncover relationships between Scotland, Ireland and western Gaul that may have prepared the maritime itinerary of the Vikings to the west of France and the future Normandy.

A Viking raid was rarely considered in ethnic terms. It made absolutely no difference to the Franks whether the Vikings were Danish or Norwegian, they were the *Nortmanni*, the 'North Men'...and all barbarians! However, two raids carried out by these fearsome 'North Men' can be attributed with certainty to the Norwegians. The earliest dates from 799 and was described by Alcuin, abbot of Saint-Martin de Tour, who spoke of the frightful landing of the 'pagans' on the coast of Aquitaine. Jean Renaud⁵ points out that this raid took place just six years after the attack on the monastery of Lindisfarne, an event which

⁴ 'classe dirigeante, sans composante paysanne appréciable', (Musset [1978] 1997, 295).

⁵ Author of many works on the Vikings, Jean Renaud is professor of languages and Scandinavian civilisation as well as director of the Department of Nordic Studies at Caen University; he is also director of the Franco-Norwegian Office, also based at Caen University.



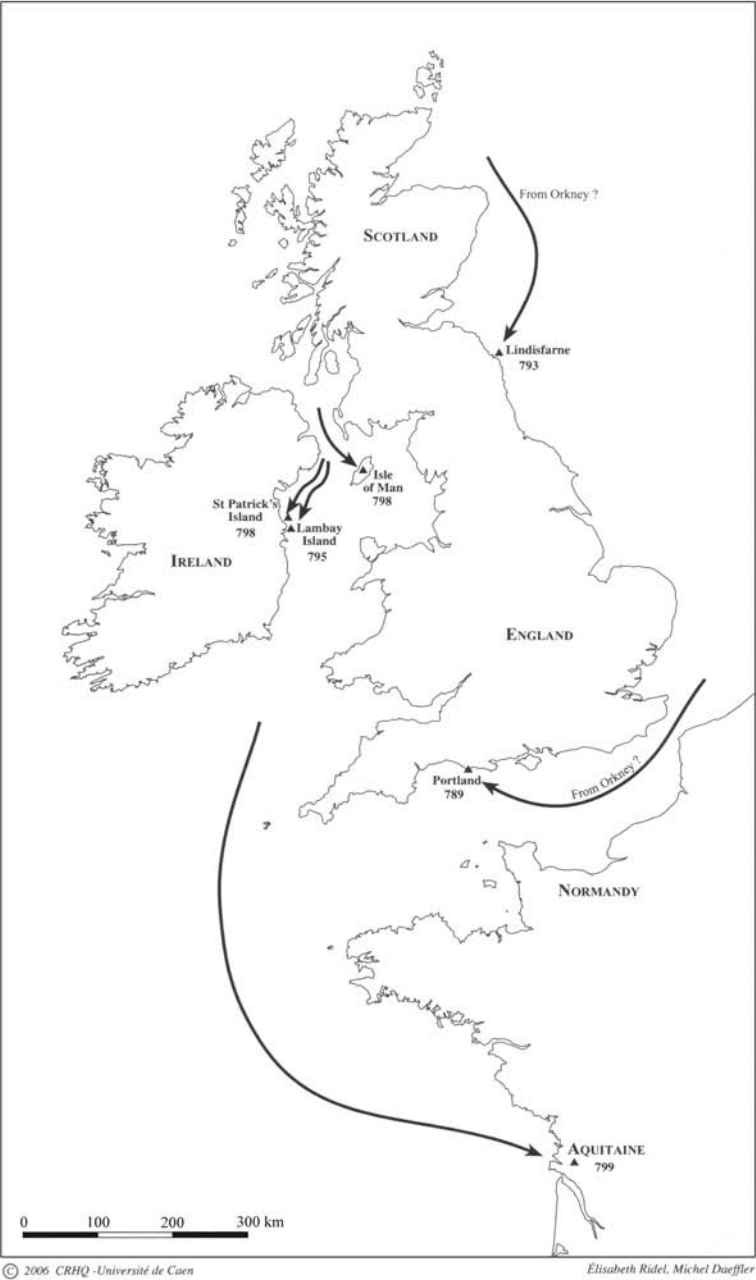
Illus. 5 Celtic personal names in West Normandy.

traditionally marks the beginning of the Viking period. He also compares these attacks to those that took place around the Irish Sea, which was the preferred hunting grounds of the Norwegians at that time, and notably on the Isle of Man in 798 (Renaud 2002, 19). We can also add to this same date the raid on St. Patrick's Island, off the east coast of Ireland. Barbara Crawford, in her first-rate work, *Scandinavian Scotland*, has already remarked upon the chronological coherence of these raids on Scotland and around the Irish Sea, concluding:

The cumulative nature of the raids recorded in the late eighth century suggests that island or headland bases were being established by Norse pirates in the Northern Isles and the Hebrides at the time (Crawford 1987, 40–1).

The attack of 799 on the coast of Aquitaine fits perfectly into this chronological and strategic context (see Illus. 6) and there is absolutely no doubt that this raid was carried out by the Norwegians from their Scottish dependencies. Another raid on the Atlantic coast may also be attributed to the Norwegians, and this time most explicitly. In 843, Nantes was attacked by Vikings whose origin was noted in the *Annales d'Angoulême* (Angoulême Annals). They were the *Wesfaldingi*, meaning the Norwegians from the Vestfold on the west bank of the Oslo fjord (Price 1989, 25; Renaud 1992, 121). As with the raid of 799, they most probably travelled from their Celtic colonies in Scotland and perhaps Ireland, where they had since settled, and not directly from Norway. There were probably other raids of similar origin on the west coast of France, but no annals or chronicles provide information of this nature. As for West Normandy, sources show little trace of Viking raids for two main reasons. First, the destruction wrought by the Second World War upon the Departmental Archives of Manche, situated in Saint-Lô, rendered impossible the conservation of contemporary documents relating to the Viking period; and second, with the exception of Mont-Saint-Michel, there were few large monasteries in this part of Normandy-to-be that were able to conserve annals which would have otherwise provided us with a chronology of Viking incursions.

However, this maritime route used by the Vikings was not new as it had already been followed by the navigator-monks of Ireland and Scotland in their quest to evangelise the West. Indeed, Normandy did not escape this wave of Celtic evangelization which spread the cult of Irish saints. Yet the Scandinavian invasions created no break in the tradition of saints in Normandy (Picard 2000). Was this because many



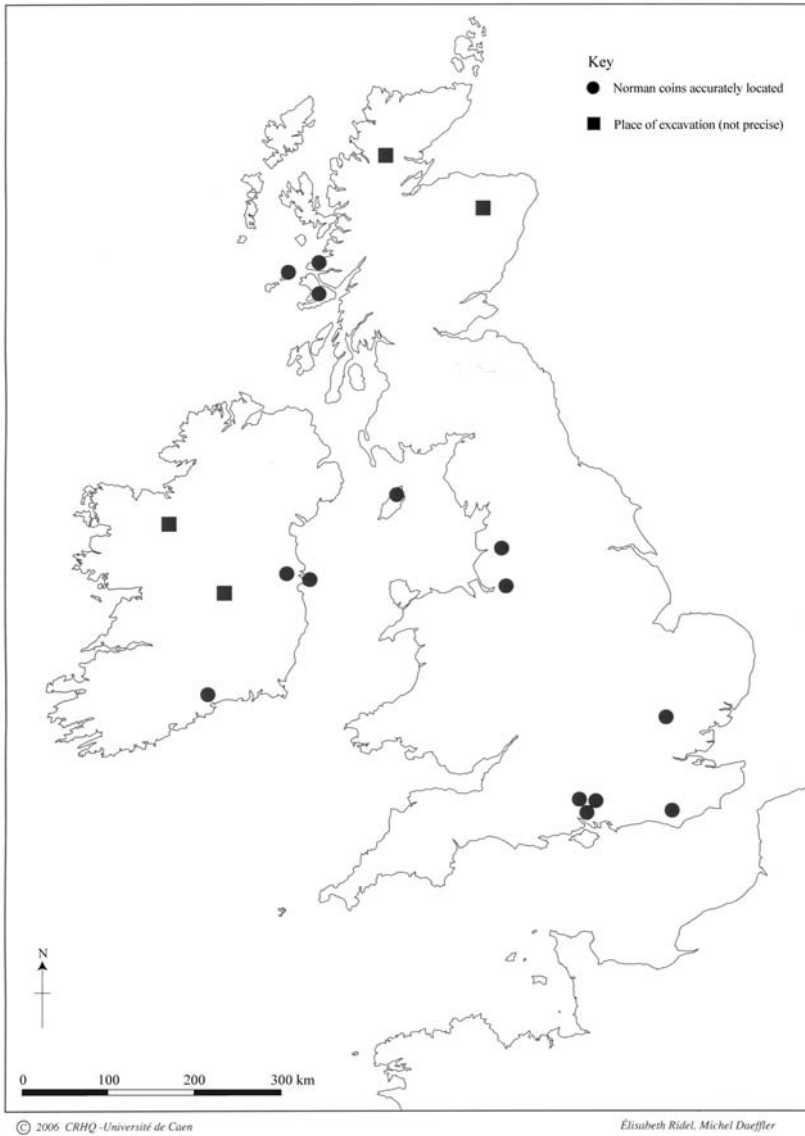
Illus. 6 Direction of Vikings raids in Britain, Ireland and France.

Vikings were coming from Celtic territories where they had already been converted to Christianity? Whether this was the case or not, archaeological evidence confirms the existence of sustained relations between Normandy and the Celtic world in the Viking period. Norman coins have been discovered in Ireland, on the Isle of Man and as far north as Scotland. Some of the most ancient coins were found on Iona in the Hebrides and at Dungurvan in Ireland, dating from the tenth century and corresponding to the reign of Richard I (942–96).⁶ Their distribution along the sea route used by the Norwegians from Scotland to West Normandy (see Illus. 7) illustrates the fact that the Viking settlers in this region of France remained in contact with the Norse settlements of Scotland and Ireland, whence they had come.

Maritime Appellatives Showing Norwegian Influence

The Vikings who travelled from their English colonies (especially from the *Danelaw*) to settle in Normandy were evidently accompanied by Anglo-Saxons, as is suggested by the numerous linguistic traces which they have left. In addition to the Anglo-Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon anthroponyms that form numerous toponyms ending in *-ville*, the invaders also brought with them a complete agrarian Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, equally present in the toponymy and the lexicon, thus indicating the settlement of a farming population. Conversely, there remain no comparable Celto-Norwegian linguistic traces: no lexical evidence of Scottish Gaelic or Middle Irish has been uncovered in Normandy, either in vocabulary or, more surprisingly, in toponymy. Nevertheless, a detailed examination of maritime toponyms of North Cotentin has thrown up several appellatives presenting Norwegian influence. In reality, rather than pursuing evidence relating to Celtic farmers, research in West Normandy has had to target navigators of Scandinavian origin who, as in Scotland and Ireland, named many prominent maritime landmarks to help them find their way around the coast. This study is the result of a long-term project, the basis of which was established more than ten years ago whilst I was a student at the University of St. Andrews carrying out research into Scandinavian toponymy under the direction

⁶ Musset [1954] 1997, 303–304; Dumas 1979, 106 (No. 3)–107 (No. 7); Dumas, Pillet-Lemière 1989, 128.



Illus. 7 Numismatic evidence of relationships between the Celtic world and Normandy in the Viking Age.

of Barbara Crawford.⁷ The initial results of this work were published in English in the journal *Northern Studies*, from which the following pertinent elements have been taken (Ridel 2000, 87–90).

The name of the rock *Dranguet*, situated off the coast of the Saire Valley, comes from the noun *drangr*, denoting high pointed rocks in Old Scandinavian. It is a typical appellative from Norway, particularly present in the Agder-Rogaland region, but which also turns up in Shetland toponymy, where it is applied to many types of rock. Indeed, two high rocks bear the name *Drongs* in St. Magnus Bay, at Hillswick, while some rocky points are called *Dranga* and *Drangiteng* (from ON *dranga-tangi*). It is the secondary meaning of ‘rocky point’ that applies to the Norman toponym *Dranguet*, for many years described as *Pointe de Dranguet* (Dranguet Point) on old marine charts. Another Norman toponym, *Queslingue*, also seems to originate from a Norwegian appellative. It is possible to make out the Old Scandinavian word *kerling*, ‘Old Witch’, which was applied in Norway to mountains of a special shape. This topographic secondary meaning is also represented in the Orkneys, where some rocks bear the name of *Carling*, as well as in Ireland in the compound *Carlingford* (from ON *Kerlingafjörðr*, ‘the old witches’ fjord’), referring to the three mountain summits south of Carlingford Lough. Lying on the east coast of the small island of Alderney, *Queslingue* is a sort of headland, of which only a part is linked to the coast by a narrow rocky isthmus. Its shape is unusual enough to catch the attention of navigators.

We may also add to this list those Scandinavian substantives that were adopted by speakers of *langue d’oïl* (Northern French) and whose meaning and form seem to be specifically West Norse. This is the case for *stakkr* which originally referred to haystacks and was metaphorically applied in Norwegian settlement zones to pyramid-shaped rocks. This appellative was adopted into West Norman patois in the form *étac* and is now only found in toponymy, appearing variously as *Estacq*, *Étaquerel*, *État*, *États*. Finally, the substantive *mielle* is still used in The Cotentin to designate sandy ground next to the sea where various plants grow (beach grass, gorse and others). From Old Scandinavian *melr*, with similar meaning, it presents, however, a diphthong that is difficult to

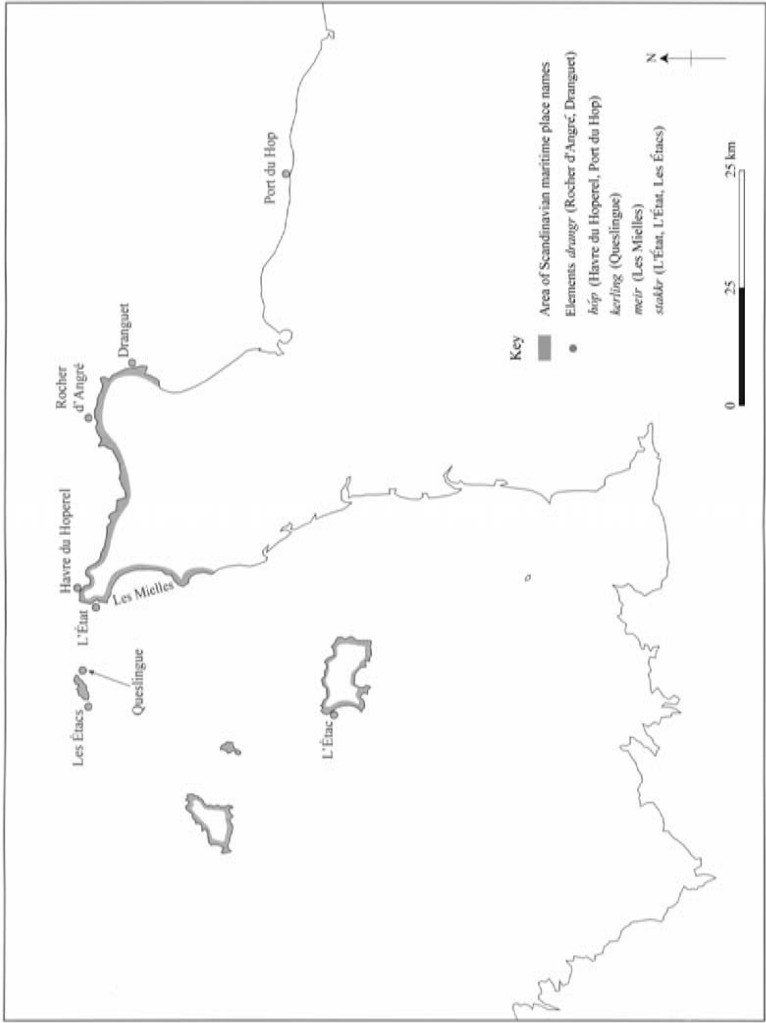
⁷ This work became the subject of my master’s thesis entitled, *Les Toponymes scandinaves dans les archipels d’Écosse et dans le nord du Cotentin. Étude comparative*, Caen University: Department of Linguistics, 1993.

explain within the context of the French language and is more akin to the Norwegian form *mjele*. Other Scandinavian appellatives, found in toponymy or in local West Norman dialects (especially on the east coast of the Cotentin and the Channel Islands), deserve to be systematically examined in much greater detail. Such research may well attribute to these words a specifically Norwegian origin.

It must be noted that these few toponyms and appellatives of Norwegian character are part of a coherent whole that stretches from Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue to Nez de Jobourg in La Hague, and includes the Channel Islands and their islets. Maritime toponyms of Scandinavian origin are abundant in this zone and present a variety of etymology that is particularly pertinent. Here follow the most typical appellatives (see Illus. 8): *ey*, 'island' (in Channel Island names such as Jersey and Guernsey); *boði*, 'rock just breaking the surface of the water' (as a simplex *boe*, *boue* and compounded in *Quillebœuf*); *holmr*, 'islet' (as a simplex *hommet*, *houmet* and in such names as *Brecqhou*, *Lihou* in the Channel Islands); *nes*, 'cape' (in Norman forms such as *Nez*); *ras*, 'strong marine current' (in the French form *raz* and in the ancient Norman toponym *Cattaras*); *sker*, 'reef' (as a simplex *équet* and compounded in *Gréniquet*, *Vitéquet*); *vík*, 'bay' (as a simplex *vy*, *vic* and compounded in *Brévy*, *Houlvi*, *Sulvy*) (Lepelley 2002; Ridel 2002). Their descriptive function and exceptional concentration, unique to Normandy, leads us to suppose that they are not only evidence of landings, but also of durable settlements of a collective nature. This group is also part of a vast area of maritime toponymy that has been deeply marked by navigators of Scandinavian origin. From the Orkneys to West Normandy, this important sea route was carefully defined so that it could be passed on to others on subsequent voyages (see Illus. 9). Is it just pure chance that the Scilly Isles off Land's End, which constitute a stepping stone between the Irish Sea and the English Channel, are called *Sorlingues* in French, a name that makes one think of the *Orkneyinga Saga* in which these islands appear under the name *Syllingar*? This avenue remains to be explored.

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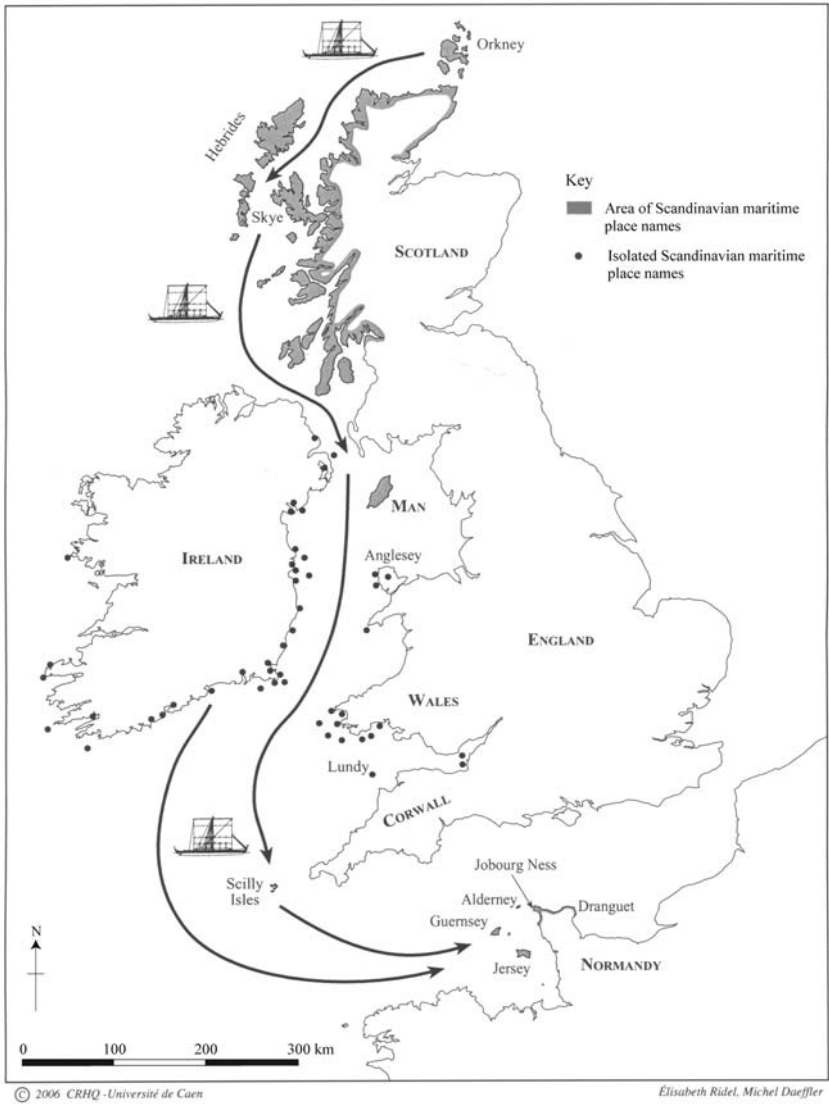
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Illus. 8 Scandinavian maritime place-names in West Normandy with some Norwegian elements.



Illus. 9 The 'Celtic Sea Route' of the Vikings.

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THE APPEARANCE AND PERSONAL ABILITIES
OF GOÐAR, JARLAR, AND KONUNGAR:
ICELAND, ORKNEY AND NORWAY

Jón Viðar Sigurðsson

Earl Rognvaldr Brúsason ‘was one of the handsomest of men, with a fine head of golden hair, smooth as silk. At an early age he grew to be tall and strong, earning a great reputation for his shrewdness and courtesy...’. His uncle, Earl Þorfinnr, ‘grew to become a great chieftain. He was unusually tall and strong, an ugly looking man with a black head of hair, sharp features, a big nose and bushy eyebrows, a forceful man, greedy for fame and fortune. He did well in battle, for he was both a good tactician and full of courage.’¹ These two descriptions are typical of how earls are portrayed in *Orkneyinga saga*, the focus being on their appearance and personal abilities. The author of *Orkneyinga saga* usually depicts only earls, and in this way underlines their importance and distinction. The earls were taller, stronger, more aggressive and smarter than other men in Orkney. It is self-evident that the descriptions of the earls’ personal skills reflect virtues that were meaningful in the power struggle in Orkney; otherwise they would not have been mentioned.

In this chapter my aim is to compare the appearance and personal abilities of earls of Orkney (*jarlar*), kings of Norway (*konungar*), and Icelandic chieftains (*goðar*) in sagas dealing with the period to c. 1200,² and how qualities attributed to these three groups of secular leaders expose significant differences between these three societies.

¹ Orks 49, 50 ‘var allra manna fríðastr, hárit mikit ok gult sem silki. Hann var snimma mikill ok sterk; manna var hann górviligastr, bæði fyrir vits sakar ok svá kurteisi...’; ‘Þorfinnr jarl gerðisk höfðingi mikill; hann var manna mestr ok sterkastr, ljótr, svartr á hár, skarpleitr ok nefmikill ok nokkut skolbrúnn. Hann var kappsmaðr mikill ok ágjarn, bæði til fjár ok metnaðar; hann var sigrsæll ok kœnn í orrostum og góðr áræðis.’ Íf XXXIV, 41, 43.

² That is *Heimskringla*, *Sverris saga*, *Orkneyinga saga*, *Íslendingasögur* and *Sturlunga saga*. For an overview of the scholarly discussion see: Bagge 1991; Bagge 1996; Sigurðsson 1999; Antonsson 1999.

Appearance and physical attributes

The Icelandic Family sagas and *Sturlunga saga* give the impression that the chieftains' appearance and physical attributes were less important than their mental qualities. The sagas do mention, for example, the chieftains' hair and eyes. These parts of the body receive particular attention due to the cultural importance of these features as indicators of noble birth and symbolic power. Other parts of the face, and the face as a whole, were of less interest (Sigurðsson 1999, 84–95).

The scant attention paid to the chieftains' physiognomy by the Icelandic Family sagas and *Sturlunga saga* stands in clear contrast to the depiction of earls and kings in *Orkneyinga saga*, *Heimskringla* and *Sverris saga*. Appearance and physical attribute are stressed in these sagas, especially in the portrayals of kings, and the virtues of strength, warrior and leadership skills in battle are glorified. The sagas stressed that the kings were more physically attractive (drawing focus again to the eyes and hair),³ taller and stronger⁴ than other men. The king's appearance and physical attributes are an important characteristic of royal qualities, and as Sverre Bagge has pointed out, there is a connection 'between beauty and strength and masculinity, but they are not synonymous' (1991, 147). Even though beauty and strength are not tantamount, these virtues underscore the belief that kings and earls are superior to other men. There is a clear difference, however, between the Norwegian kings and the earls of Orkney. The kings are in a class of their own and thus cannot be compared to earls or local chieftains in Norway, only to their social equals, other kings.

This focus on mien and physical attributes and their bearing on power explains why kings and earls sometimes mutilated bodies of their enemies in place of killing their opponents, that is to say depriving a person of his noble virtues.⁵ In Iceland, the only mutilations of chieftains in the Free State period (c. 930–1262/64) was the one of Hrafnkell *Freysgoði* and Órækja Snorrason in 1236.⁶

³ Bagge 1991, 146–191; Hjärdar 2001, 51; Íf XXXIV, 11, 41, 43, 54, 87, 95, 103, 129, 130, 143, 155, 241. Jfr. Bagge 1996.

⁴ Íf XXXIV, 11, 41, 43, 54, 87; Íf XXVI, 94, 146, 148, 149, 187, 204, 213, 232, 333; Íf XXVII, 4; Íf XXVII, 95, 118, 297, 330.

⁵ Íf XXVII, 105; Íf XXVIII, 87, 287; Íf XXXIV, 109, 295, 295, 297.

⁶ Íf XI, 120; Sts I, 390–397.

The descriptive differences in physical traits of Icelandic chieftains, Orknian earls and Norwegian kings emphasize overall that Icelandic society was comparatively more peaceful. This concept is supported by the mere two references to chiefly weapon skills in the sagas,⁷ and the general absence of chiefly killings before 1210. Further grounds for this is evident in the apparent political death of any chieftain who suffered a decisive defeat either in an armed conflict or an important dispute in the General Assembly. They were stripped of prestige and their power base dissolved. Icelandic politics held it a greater punishment to live with the shame than to be killed (Sigurðsson 1999, 86–89). This was not the case in Norway and Orkney, where kings and earls had no compunction about killing their adversaries. The societies of Norway and Orkney, especially the latter, were more concerned with wars and armed conflicts, and were therefore more violent than Icelandic society in the 11th and 12th centuries. The power struggle between kings dominated the political scene in Norway during this period, while the earls in Orkney engaged in wars and Viking activities (like plundering), such that the Orkneys can be definitively labelled as the last Viking Age frontier.

The Norwegian kings controlled the Orkneys from the time of Haraldr *hárfagri*, rendering it impossible for the saga writers to ignore the differences between the kings and the earls. This was not, however, the case in Iceland, which stayed ‘independent’ until 1262/64 when it became a part of the Norwegian kingdom. Nevertheless, the king was the focal point of Icelandic culture from the time of the settlement, which is clearly demonstrated by the general use of the Norwegian regnal periods as the chronological framework in the Icelandic Family sagas. It was therefore impossible for saga writers to portray the Icelandic chieftains in the same way as the kings.

Shrewdness

Shrewdness is the characteristic that the sagas emphasise most in descriptions of the chieftains highlighting the acumen of the chieftains to explain how some chieftains survived the power struggles while others went to the wall. On the whole, the smartest, most politically

⁷ Íf VIII, 19; Íf IV, 22.

savvy chieftains became the most powerful. Snorri *goði* is a good example of such a chieftain. Icelandic Family sagas emphasise his wisdom, knowledge of the law, patience, boldness, determination and generosity. In *Grettis saga*, Grettir Ásmundarson states that Snorri's manoeuvring skills brought many men to their knees.⁸ Snorri also gave 'good counsel to his friends, but his enemies rather thought they felt the cold heartedness of his counsels'.⁹ This emphasis on the chieftains' wisdom shows that the political battles in the Free State were usually fought with wits, seldom with weapons. Power struggles were a question of mental tactics and political manoeuvres.

The kings' sagas do enunciate the importance of astuteness, as in the saga of Haraldr *harðráði*, who was 'stronger and stouter than other men, and so wise that nothing was impossible to him, and he had always the victory when he fought a battle; and he was also so rich in gold that no man could compare with him in wealth.'¹⁰ However, wisdom was just one of many abilities good kings required for success (Hjardar 2001, 49–94),—the kings were cleverer than other men.

Only in a few cases does *Orkneyinga saga* mention the earls' perspicacity,¹¹ and it appears as if this ability was of less consequence for the earls of Orkney than it was for kings in Norway or chieftains in Iceland. This departure may have its reason in the predominant activities of the Orkneys, where Viking raiding was more important than in the other two societies, hence *Orkneyinga saga's* particular attention to the personal abilities that result in victory in war and battles.

One would expect that the sagas would articulate the legal expertise and role of the secular leaders in legislation, but this is not the case. Though Icelanders with law skills are frequently mentioned in the sagas, chieftains are hardly ever included among them. Of the 31 Lawspeakers (*lögsgumenn*) in the Free State period only 11 were chieftains. Four of the first six Lawspeakers were chieftains but after that chieftains only sporadically became Lawspeakers. Although the legal knowledge of the chieftains is hardly ever mentioned, most of them were well versed in the law. This was taken for granted and there was no need to refer

⁸ Íf VIII, 221; Sigurðsson 1999, 88.

⁹ Íf IV, 26, 'heilráðr vinum sínum, en óvinir hans þóttusk heldr kulða af kenna ráðum hans'.

¹⁰ Íf XXVIII, 95, 'meiri en aðrir menn ok sterkari ok svá vitr, at honum var ekki ófært ok hann hafði ávallt sigr, er hann barðisk—hann var ok svá auðigr at gulli at engi maðr vissi doemi til' Bagge 1991, 149; Hjardar 2001, 55–57.

¹¹ Íf XXXIV, 43, 93, 95, 103, 143, 155, 241 54, 87.

to it. The law was a critical tool in the political game, which the chieftains could use to their advantage to put pressure on their opponents. For this reason, a good understanding of the law was essential.¹² In Iceland, new laws were either introduced at the Law Council, an institution which the chieftains controlled, or by all members of the general assembly at Þingvellir.¹³

The legal knowledge of the earls of Orkney is not mentioned, and on only a few occasions are kings of Norway said to be in possession of this ability, the reason being that this ability did not play any significant role in the political struggles in Norway and the Orkneys. However, the Norwegian kings did participate in the legislation process, and sometimes used new laws to create popularity.¹⁴ Even though the Kings of Norway officially had control over the Orkneys, they were never involved in establishing laws there; that was not their task. Only in two cases were the earls of Orkney involved in organizing new laws.¹⁵ Nonetheless, it is rather likely that the earls controlled legislation in Orkney, and this fact was obvious enough in itself that it was usually not worth talking about. The sagas therefore do not give us a complete picture of the secular leaders' involvement, but through descriptions of their appearance and personal abilities underline the most important areas of activity.

Generosity

The sagas place a great deal of emphasis on the generosity and wealth of kings, earls and chieftains.¹⁶ Gifts and feasts were used to create and/or renew ties of friendship, and it was through friendship that secular leaders built up their power base. Strong obligations of loyalty were associated with friendship; therefore it was the only means secular leaders had to ensure support. If the recipient could not afford to

¹² Exceptions were e.g. Valla-Ljótr Ljótólfsson (Íf X, 241), and Einarr Þorgilsson (Sts I, 68). Byock 1988, 20–21; Miller 1990, 226; Sigurðsson 1999, 90.

¹³ Línal 1984, 138–147.

¹⁴ Íf XXVII, 242 'lög og landsrétt'; Íf XXVIII, 31; Bagge 1991, 132; Hjardar 2001, 58–61.

¹⁵ Íf XXXIV, 80, 113.

¹⁶ Baumann 1986, 142; Byock 1988, Index 'Gifts'; Miller 1990, 77–109; Bagge 1986, 147–165; Bagge 1991, Index 'Generosity'; Sigurðsson 1989, 81–91; Sigurðsson 1999, 84–140; Syvertsen 1997, 19–80; Hjardar 2001, 61–77; Íf XXXIV, 32, 33, 34, 35, 67, 98, 99, 103, 104, 195, 241.

give a gift in return, the gift was to be paid for by rendering services; otherwise it could be taken back, and it was the service or a counter gift that ensured the right to own or dispose of the gift. Because of the strong obligation to reciprocate, gifts were a good instrument by which secular leaders could bind supporters to themselves.¹⁷ *Laxdæla saga* narrates that after a swimming contest with Kjartan Ólafsson, King Óláfr Tryggvason gave him a cloak. Kjartan's men were not happy that he had accepted the gift and thought he had 'put himself' too much under the king's power'.¹⁸ In *Orkneyinga saga* we are informed that: 'Those who owe the earl great gifts ought to support him better.'¹⁹

In all three societies powerful secular leaders were described as *vinsæli*, that is, a person rich in friends.²⁰ Generous leaders achieved great honour and consequently, more individuals wished to become their friends. The generosity of the kings, earls and chieftains is usually expressed in the distribution of wealth downwards in society; however, the kings usually gave gifts to chieftains in Norway, whereas the earls and chieftains gave gifts to householders. The gift-giving process was self perpetuating: if the secular leaders did not continue to arrange feasts and give gifts, their friends would start looking for other more generous leaders. The powerbase was therefore highly unstable, and boiled down to the economy of the leaders.

Óláfs saga helga describes a situation involving two royal pretendants vying for supporters:

With Erlingr went messengers from King Knútr well provided with a large amount of money; and in winter they travelled through all the country, paying the money which King Knútr had promised to many in autumn for their assistance. They gave presents in money, besides, to many whose friendship could be purchased for King Knútr. They received much assistance in their travels from Erlingr. In this way it came to pass that many turned their support to King Knútr, promised him their services, and agreed to oppose King Óláfr. Some did this openly, but many more concealed it from the public.²¹

¹⁷ Sigurðsson 2004, 67–75.

¹⁸ Íf V, 118, 'gengit á konungs vald'.

¹⁹ Íf XXXIV, "Fylgi þeir betr jarli, er honum eigu fleiri gjafar at launa."

²⁰ Sigurðsson 1999, 93, 120–150; Hjardar 2001, 61–69. Íf XXVI, 148, 166, 176, 234, 205, 251, 290, 292, 372; Íf XXVII, 28, 242, 288, 300, 330; Íf XXVIII, 31, 107, 157, 202, 209, 211 'Magnúsi konungi líkaði illa stórgjafar þær, er Hákon konungr hafði gefit bóndum til vinsælda sér', 237, 256, 266, 278, 331, 384, 385; Íf XXXIV, 29, 75, 93, 103, 105, 113, 119, 130, 241.

²¹ Íf XXVII, 294. 'Með Erlingi fóru norðr í Nóreg sendimenn Knúts konungs og

Snorri Sturluson explains Knútr's success by the fact that he was wealthier than Óláfr, and 'bought' his friends. The loyalty between the givers and receivers lasted as long as the givers' wealth. The chieftain Snorri does not comment on the behaviour of the Norwegian magnates, for him it was unexceptional and he knew this game far too well from Iceland. The reciprocity between secular leaders and their friends was the fundamental basis of friendship, and if the leaders failed to provide their friends with gifts or arrange feasts, they knew that their support would fade away. This notion of the mutual obligation attached to friendship was intrinsic to Norse culture, and is prominently expressed in *Hávamál* (Eddadigte 21).

Another important aspect of friendship that we see in all three societies was the obligation of the leaders to support and protect their friends involved in disputes. Neglecting to perform this duty meant they could not expect their friends' support at a later point. Helpful, resolute and generous chieftains became *vinśælir*; in other words, they became powerful, and on this foundation could further expand their power.

Despite the pivotal role of generosity in all three societies, there was a discrepancy between gifts given by kings and gifts from chieftains or earls. As the Norwegian king was invested with divine right, receiving his gifts meant that the recipient also acquired a part of his sacredness (Gurevich 1968).

The sacred king

As explained earlier, the difference between kings, earls and chieftains is clear: kings are taller, stronger, wiser and more beautiful. This distinction becomes even clearer if we look at the term luck (*gæfa*, *hamingja*, *gipta*), a term used frequently in connection with kings, but on the odd occasion with earls and chieftains. This originates in the concept that kings were possessed of attributes beyond those of ordinary mortals in the sovereign link with the divine.²²

höfðu með sér óf lausafjár. Fóru þeir um vetrinn víða um land, reiddu þá af hendi fé þau, er Knútr konungr hafði heitit mönnum um haustit til liðs sér, en gáfu hinum mörgum, er þeir fengu með fé keypt vináttu Knúti konungi. En þeir höfðu traust Erlings til yfirferðar. Gerðisk þá svá, at fjöldi manna snörisk til vináttu við Knút konung ok hétu honum þjónostu sinni ok því með at veita Óláfi konungi mótstöðu. Gerðu þat sumir berlega, en hinir váru miklu fleiri, er leyndusk at fyrir alþýðu.'

²² The following discussion is based on: Schlesinger 1953; Brentano 1964; Chaney

Amongst the Teutons was a general belief that chieftains were descended from the gods, and it was this presumed noble descent that gave rise to the idea of good fortune. During the time of the Great Migrations, this ancestry provided the basis for the office of a king. Gregory of Tours relates the custom of the Merovingians who crossed the Rhine in the early 5th century to choose long-haired sons from the noblest families as their kings (GoT II, 53). Long hair was originally a symbol of aggressive war leaders or of religious power. These two ideas merged at the time of the Migrations, manifesting the fusion in the symbolic value of long hair as a characteristic of the new kind of sacred sovereign in whom both institutions converged in a singular person.

When a chieftain was appointed king, his good luck became an icon for his supporters. The idea of good fortune was associated with good health and healing, and it was held that kings not only had better constitutions than others, but their injuries healed faster. An inherited trait, good luck was associated with divine lineage, and since the king represented the link between the gods and the people, it was a natural step from sacred royalty to the belief that the divinely descended king could bring health, happiness, peace and good crops to his people. Prosperity in times of peace and victories in war were confirmation that the gods were protecting the king, his good luck or charismatic power had withstood the test, and his sacred ‘Weihe’ had grown.

By reason of his divine attributes, the king had to lead his men into battle and thereby demonstrate the support of the gods for his men. Kings sought ever more glory: “for glorious deeds one should have a king, not for a long life.”²³ Kings were expected to be generous, good speakers, trustworthy and helpful to friends, but cruel towards enemies and their consorts. If the king’s good luck disappeared, his people had no alternative but to replace him with someone who could restore relations with the gods. The king’s fortune was a symbol of the people and their circumstances, and at his death, the ‘nation’ disintegrated unless a worthy successor was found.

1970; Wallace-Hadrill 1971; McTurk 1975–6, McTurk 1994; Feeley-Harnik 1991; Steinsland 1991; Steinsland 1997; Steinsland 2000; Sundqvist 2005 and *Sakralkönigtum* in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde* 26 (2004), 179–318. For a critical view on this idea see: Baetke 1964; Krag 1991.

²³ Íf XXVIII, “‘Til frægðar skal konung hafa, en ekki langlífis.”’

There was a large measure of continuity between the pagan and the Christian sacred monarchy. When the Carolingians took over the throne in 751, the last Merovingian king was shorn—deconsecrated—and sent to a monastery. The Carolingians carried on the tradition of a sacred monarchy, but on a more Christian basis. At the same time, the Carolingians used Merovingian elements to justify their position; for example, two of the sons of Charlemagne were named after Merovingian kings, and when Charles the Bald, the grandson of Charlemagne, was crowned in 869, a genealogical table was produced which went back to the first Christian Merovingian king, Clovis I.

The same kind of continuity could also be observed in Norway. According to *Heimskringla*, the family of Haraldr *háfagri* could be traced back to Yngvi-Freyr. The poem *Glælognskviða*, written by Þórarinn *loftunga* in 1032, tells how St. Óláfr achieved ‘good harvest and peace for all men’.²⁴ The Christian monarchy was strengthened by the martyrdom of Óláfr Haraldsson and his transformation into the kingdom’s saint and ‘Eternal King’ (*rex perpetuus Norvegiae*). Óláfr became a sacred ‘ancestral father’ for the Norwegian kings.²⁵

The king’s sacred function may also be observed in the way in which *Heimskringla* sums up each reign. Snorri concluded the saga of Sigurðr Jórsalafari as follows: ‘Sigurðr had been king in Norway for twenty-seven years. He was forty years old then. And his reign was blessed for the people of the land with both peace and good harvests.’²⁶ It is the last time a Norwegian king is described in this way. After the death of Sigurðr in 1130, the civil wars started and continued until 1240. It would be unthinkable, therefore, for Snorri and other saga writers to maintain that the reigns of the Norwegian kings after 1130 had been beneficial to the people. This does not mean, however, that the kings had lost their sacred function. This was evident in the practice of taking child-kings into battle so that their sacred attributes could protect their warriors. The notion of the sacred king is also documented in *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. When Hákon was elected king in 1217, Sturla Þórðarson, author of the saga, writes that this year was so good that fruit grew twice on the fruit trees, and the wild birds laid eggs twice

²⁴ Íf XXVII, 408; Skaldediktning I-A, 327, ‘ár ok frið / ǫllum mǫnnum’.

²⁵ Sveaas Andersen 1977, 274–275; Myers & Wolfram 1982, 234–244.

²⁶ Íf XXVIII, 277, ‘Sigurðr var konungr yfir Nóregi sjau vetr ok tuttugu. Hann var at aldri fertögr. Ok var hans ǫld góð landsfólkinu, var þá bæði ár ok friðr.’

(Eirsp 489). If we accept the idea of sacred kingship, it is difficult to argue that the king was *primus inter pares* (Bagge 1991); the kings possessed abilities other men did not have.

It was widely believed by the Germanic peoples, as already mentioned, that the chieftain families were descended from the gods, and that luck was connected to this noble lineage. The rise of royal power in Norway and other countries led to the charismatic qualities attributed to the chieftain families becoming confined to kings only, a process which weakened the noble families. The close contacts between Iceland and Norway, and Norway and Orkney meant that the changed attitude towards chieftains in Norway also affected the way in which they were seen both in Iceland, and in Orkney, which had come under the control of the Norwegian kings earlier. The conquest of Norway by the Hárfagri family therefore robbed not only the Norwegian, but also the Icelandic chieftains of their divine attributes, which explains why the Sagas of Icelanders only occasionally link the expressions *gæfa*, *hamingja* and *gipta* with chieftains and earls, preferring instead to apply them mainly to kings.

The divergence in the power of kings on the one side, and earls and chieftains on the other, is also reflected in the semantic changes in the concepts *frô*, *truhtîn* and *herrô* in Old High German, *fréa*, *dryhten* and *hearra* in Old English and *freyr*, *dróttinn* and *herra* in Old Norse.²⁷ Initially the terms were used about kings and military leaders. *Frô*, the oldest, was generally replaced by *truhtîn* followed by *herrô* just before the introduction of Christianity into Western Europe. The new faith led to a semantic extension of the last two terms to encompass God and Jesus. Originally, there was little difference between *truhtîn* and *herrô*, both were used to describe the mutual relationship between those in authority and those subordinate to that authority. Later, *truhtîn* was replaced by *herrô*, and by approximately AD 900 its semantic meaning had widened to 'the absolute authority of a supreme lord, the king or God'.²⁸

Freyr in the sense of master is virtually unknown in Old Norse. There is only one example in Johan Fritzner's *Ordbog over Det gamle norske Sprog* (Dictionary of Old Norse). It comes from a story in *Sturlunga saga*, which describes the Vatnsfirðingar's attack on Sauðafell in Dalir in 1229. They

²⁷ Green 1965, 19, 270 note 1, 276–278, 405, 415–418; Magnússon 1989.

²⁸ Green 1965, 513, 48–55, 263–269, 276–278, 316–321, 341–346, 398–401, 449–487; Schlesinger 1953, 226–227.

wanted to avenge their father and kill Sturla Sighvatsson, but he had left by the time they stormed the farm: ‘They went up to Sólveigar’s [Sturla’s wife] bed-closet with threats, shook their bloody weapons at her, and said that these were the weapons with which they had coloured the hair on Dala-Freyr.’²⁹ *Dala-Freyr* refers to both Sturla’s position of power in Dalir and his liking for women, so in this context, the term is both a title denoting power and a term of abuse.

Dróttinn was used primarily about kings, God and Jesus, but also about slave owners, landowners (sing. *landsdróttinn*) and church owners (sing. *kirkjudróttinn*). *Herra* too was mainly used in connection with kings, God and Jesus, but was also used about male members of the Royal Family, bishops, abbots, earls and the king’s officials. The term used most frequently to describe the Icelandic chieftains and the Earls of Orkney was *hofðingi*. This term was used to portray all different kinds of leaders, e.g. leaders of groups of slaves, kings and God (Svenningsen 2002).

The reservation of the terms *herra* and *dróttinn* primarily for kings, God and Jesus, and not for secular chieftains, reflects two different kinds of subordination. *Dróttinn* and *herra* had more power over their subordinates and were imbued with the privilege to use death as punishment (Kgs 73), while chieftains did not have this authority over their supporters. This discrepancy is witnessed by the sagas regular association of the terms ‘power’ (*vald*) and ‘to punish’ (*refsa*, *hegna*) with kings (See 1981, 426–35). *Hofðingjar* had *forráð* or *forsjá* over those they led and they could only go as far as taking revenge (*hefna*). The difference between punishing and taking revenge was that a person who could punish other people had more power over them than a person who could only avenge a wrongdoing.

Hermann-Josef Seggewiß argues that the descriptions of the chieftains in the Icelandic Family sagas follow a particular European pattern, where the terms *ríkr*, *vinsell*, *sterkr* and *ágætr* were commonly used (1978, 26–30). Although the sagas highlight some qualities that were important in the power struggles, they contain few clichés when they are depicting chieftains, or kings and earls, and there were wide variations of vocabulary. This can be seen, for example, in the range of words

²⁹ Sts I, 327, ‘Þeir gengu at hvílu Solveigar [Sturla’s wife] með brugðnum ok blógum vápnum ok hristu at henni ok sögðu, at þar vǫru þau vápnin, er þeir höfðu litat lokinn á honum Dala-Freyr með.’

used to denote wisdom. If, however, we accept that there was a connection between the outcome of the political game and the chieftains', kings' and earls' personal abilities, then saga authors had a very limited vocabulary to choose from. The secular leaders' negative qualities are rarely emphasised, which accords with the general tendency in the sagas not to describe negative qualifications directly, but to allow the character traits to appear indirectly through people's actions.

There was a clear division between the three groups: the kings were at the top of the social pyramid, underneath them were earls and chieftains. In the period we are discussing there was a significant difference between earls and chieftains, which is seen in the commissions of Icelandic skalds to the courts of Norwegian kings and the earls of Orkney, but not to Icelandic chieftains. This did change in the late 12th and 13th centuries, when Icelandic chieftains become powerful and wealthy enough to include skalds in their group of retainers. The saga descriptions of the secular leaders in Norway, Orkney and Iceland highlight not only the differences between them, but the fact that Icelandic society was more peaceful than the other two.

The major issue in this comparison between kings, earls and chieftains is that all the sagas were written in Iceland. Can we have confidence that the saga authors give an accurate and trustworthy picture of the differences between the three groups of secular leaders? This question is elemental to the study of Norse culture. It does appear that the saga authors were aware of the differences between the three societies, otherwise one would expect more Icelandic anachronism in the stories about kings and earls. I have previously argued that the authors of the Sagas of Icelanders had realised that there had been changes in Icelandic society, such as the introduction of Christianity, and that they were conscious that some events had happened before of after such major events, giving the author's chronological perspective. The sagas writers tried to distinguish between the past and the present by refraining from mixing words, such as the use of the term 'trusted man' (*trúnaðarmaðr*), commonly found in medieval Norse literature. The Icelandic episcopal sagas (*Biskupa sögur*) contain four examples dating from the end of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th. *Shurlunga saga* has one instance from 1186, and eight from the period 1228–1250. However, the term 'trusted man' only appears twice in the Sagas of Icelanders, once in *Grettis saga* and once in *Króka-Refs*

saga, both of which are from the 14th century.³⁰ If the saga authors were capable of distinguishing the past from the present, why should they not be able to tell the difference between the three societies? We should not, however, overestimate the saga authors' capability. They made their mistakes but we can nevertheless rely on the picture they present, it is the best we have.

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³⁰ Sigurðsson 1999, 17–38.

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‘LORDS OF NORROWAY’ THE SHETLAND ESTATE OF HERDIS THORVALDSDATTER

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‘The lords of Norroway’ are mentioned in several Shetland sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These ‘lords’, aristocratic families based in (Western) Norway, were inheritors of the vast estate that a lady of Shetland origins, Herdis Thorvaldsdatter, had amassed before her death in 1363. The present paper takes a closer look at this estate.

Herdis was the daughter of *herra* Thorvald Thoresson, the king of Norway’s *sylumaðr* in Shetland in the 1290s, by his second marriage to Ragndid. Thorvald and Ragndid had two children, a son, Thorvald, and Herdis. The latter was probably born around 1305. Herdis first enters the sources in 1328, when she met with other prominent men and women to assess a dowry (DN II, 165). Thus she must have reached the full legal age of twenty at that time.

Herdis made one, probably two, strategic marriages. Her first, documented marriage was to Svein Sigurdsson, who is mentioned as regional treasurer in Bergen 1328–9. Svein died in 1332. Herdis’ second marriage, as suggested by the historian P. A. Munch in 1862, was probably to the Norwegian nobleman, Bjarne Erlingsson, who married an unnamed, prominent woman in 1343. This earned Herdis the title of ‘fru’ (lady), which is used in the later sources (Øye 2002, 88). Bjarne was the only son of the *drottsete* Erling Vidkunsson, that is the highest royal official of the time, who also owned the Bjarkøy estate in Northern Norway. Bjarne Erlingsson, who was knighted on his own account, perished in 1349, leaving Herdis a widow for the second time.

Herdis’ estate

Herdis died in 1363. According to an Icelandic annal, it happened in Copenhagen, where Lady Herdis was travelling with the Norwegian royal court (*Íslandske annaler*, p. 360), which states also, without any support in other sources, that there was foul play involved. She was

without surviving siblings, children, or siblings' children (DN II, 375, 1363, also Sollied 1942), a destiny most likely met by many in the years immediately following the Black Death. Taking Norwegian rules of inheritance into account, this means that she must have inherited both from her father and from her brother. Furthermore, she must have received substantial gifts from her two husbands, both of whom were wealthy landowners.

In the case of Svein Sigurdsson, Herdis's dowry and dower (i.e. the values brought by Herdis into the marriage and the values pledged by Svein in response, respectively) amounted to more than 300 *forngilde*, Norwegian marks. In addition, Herdis got substantial gifts from Svein (Øye 2002, 87–8). Among the gifts were also properties in Shetland (DN I, 220, 1332). We do not know about the gifts presumably given by Bjarne Erlingsson to Herdis, but they were probably substantial.

In her later years, Herdis also acquired a number of properties in Shetland, thus adding to her fortune. Two property deeds are preserved, one dealing with properties in Walls (*Shetland Documents 1195–1579*, No. 9, cf. DN III, 284, 1355), and one with properties in Unst (*Shetland Documents 1195–1579*, No. 11, cf. DN III, 310, 1360). Her Shetland estate seems to have amounted to more than 1300 Shetland marks (see below).

Being without direct heirs, Herdis decided on her deathbed that both her inherited estates and the properties she had bought were to be used for the foundation of a Cistercian monastery. In case the monastery was not built, her estate would pass to the king (Øye 2002, 89).

Why this monastery did not come into being, we do not know. Already in her year of death, 1363, the lawman in Bergen enquires into the relationship between the deceased and *herra* Sigurd Hafthorsson, and it was concluded that the father of the latter, the mighty Hafthor Jonsson of Sudrheim (Sørum) in Eastern Norway, who had been married to Agnes, the daughter of King Håkon V, was the brother of Herdis' mother, Lady Ragndid. Thus Sigurd Hafthorsson and his brother, Jon, being the closest in kin, were granted Herdis' estate (DN II, 375, 1363, cf. Øye op. cit.). Her properties thus passed to her mother's side.

The king's claim to Herdis' estate is never mentioned again in the preserved sources. Soon after, Earl Henry Sinclair seems to have set out deliberately to incorporate Shetland within his Orkney earldom, and in 1379 had to promise King Håkon VI that he would not alienate or sell any properties of the earldom away from the king (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 18–19). Some years later, we learn that Malise Sperra, a claimant of the earldom family and most likely also a royal 'foud', had

seized the properties owned by Herdis Thorvaldsdatter, but that these were now restored to Sigurd and Jon Hafthorsson (Crawford 1983, 38, *Shetland Documents 1195–1579*, No. 13, cf. DN I, 501, 1386). Presumably, the king dropped his claim to Herdis' estate (Øye 2002, 89).

When Sigurd Hafthorson died, his estate passed to his daughter. When she died, it passed to her son, Sigurd Jonsson of Sørum and Giske (the latter farm situated in Møre, Western Norway), then the *drottsete* and the greatest landowner in Norway around the middle of the fifteenth century.

We do not have many sources from which to learn of the handling of the Shetland part of the vast Sørum-Giske estate in the fifteenth century. However, in 1485 we hear of plundering in Shetland by 'the lords of Norway and their agents' (quoted from Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 21). This may reflect a reaction to the arrival in the north of Lord Henry Sinclair in 1480, as suggested by Barbara Crawford (*loc cit*). Under any circumstances, it is a clear sign that the absentee landlords were (still) prepared to defend their properties by any means necessary.

It was not until well after the pledge of Shetland to Scotland (1469), in 1490, that Sigurd Jonsson's estate was formally divided. By that time, 25 years had passed since the death of the last owner of the undivided estate, Hans Sigurdsson, the son of Sigurd.

The tripartite division of the estate

There were three parts to the division of Sigurd's estate in 1490. The inheritors were Otte Matsson Rømer, Alv Knutsson (*tre roser*), and Arald Kane, the latter acting on behalf of two sisters, Sigrid Erlendsdatter and Sigrid Erlendsdatter (*Shetland Documents 1195–1579*, No. 30, cf. DN VIII, 426).

The deed of division, specifying which parts of Sigurd Jonsson's estate fell to each of the three benefactors, is the first listing of the properties Lady Herdis Thorvaldsdatter had amassed in Shetland. Although lacking in details, the list gives us insight into the basic structure of her Shetland estate.

Alv Knutsson seems to have inherited the most important Norwegian properties, Giske and Sudrheim. In Shetland he got Vaila and 'all the lands' in Walls (*Vogafjordwnggh*), Foula, properties in Sandness and Northmavine, as well as 'all the lands' in Unst and Fetlar. Otte Matsson's

part consisted of the Kvåle estate in Sogn, and in Shetland, Papa (Stour), Wethersta and Busta in Delting, 'all the lands in North Mavine' (*Mawedes 'otting'*), and 'the lands' in Yell. The Dønnes estate in northern Norway featured prominently in the part allotted to Arald Kane. He also got properties in Shetland: Noss 'with all the properties laid under it', 'the lands' in Bressay, Ustaness in Whiteness, and properties in Tingwall, Delting, Lunnasting, Nesting and Whalsay. The standard phrase used in Scottish records when referring to these three estates is '*Vaila and Vailaguids*', '*Papa and Papaguids*', and '*Noss and Nossguids*', 'guids' being the Norwegian term *gods*, i.e. estate.

Beyond the basic composition of the estate, the 1490 document leaves much to be desired. To get any more details, we have to consult later sources dealing with each of the three parts. The Vaila part is best covered. Gørvel Fadersdatter (Sparre of Hjulsta and Angsö), Alv Knutsson's great granddaughter, inherited the estate. Fru Gørvel's huge estate consisted of the majority of the old Sudrheim estate, the Bjarkøy estate, and the Giske and Finne estates (Bjørkvik 1958, 64). In 1582 she made over her land in Shetland to the king of Denmark-Norway, and a list of her properties was drawn up (*Shetland Documents 1580–1611*, No. 42). This gives detailed information about the properties in Shetland, i.e. their location, value and tenancies.

As far as the sources go, the Vaila estate was left unchanged between 1490 and 1582. We know, however, that both Knut Alvsson and Karine Alvsdatter, both of whom controlled Alv Knutsson's estate before it passed to Lady Gørvel, did sell off lands in Norway. Thus Knut Alvsson sold the Bjørø estate in Trøndelag (DN I, 995 1498), while Karine Alvsdatter sold the Æri estate (DN IV, 1114, 1539). Furthermore, from a document dated 1531 (?) we learn that the Shetland part of the deceased Alv Knutsson's estate at that time was owned by Ture Jonsson (*tre roser*), who also administered the estates in Western and Northern Norway on behalf of Lady Gørvel (DN XIV, 540). But none of the sources passed down to us tell of any transactions involving lands in the Shetland part of the estate.

There is a potentially more serious source-critical problem with the Papa part. In this case, the primary source is a charter of 1624 in favour of Gilbert Mowat which lists the lands in Northmavine (NAS, GD/248/395/2). The problem with this document is that one cannot be certain that all these lands were part of the original Papa estate, since the Mowat family might have acquired other lands by 1624. On the

other hand, some properties must have been removed from the estate between 1490 and 1624. Busta and Wethersta in Delting belonged to the estate inherited by Otte Matsson in 1490, but were in other hands already in the late sixteenth century.

There is also a bond of surety of 1631 in favour of Christian Stewart, lessee of Papa and Papaguids (NAS, CS290/62, reg. 20). It does not list the lands, but it names various tenants on the lands. It is most likely that their addresses are those of farms in the Papa estate. There is a certain degree of congruence between the two lists. Unfortunately, there are no Yell lands in the 1624 list, and, even if some farms on this island are mentioned in the document from 1631, it seems impossible to reconstruct the Yell part of the estate. All the lands in Papa Stour itself belonged to the estate, as witnessed by several sources (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, Smith 2000).

For the Noss estate, there is a feu charter in favour of Thomas Leslie of Burwick, dated 1664, listing 'his udal landis eftermentioned callit and disingued (*sic*) lordis of Norrowayis land of Noss and Nossgoodis' (NAS, RS44/4 folios 153r–154v). This seems to be an exhaustive list of the lands belonging to the estate, although, again, we cannot be sure whether the Noss part of Sigurd Jonsson's estate in 1490 still remained intact 175 years later, or if some lands had been sold off or, less likely in our opinion, new ones had been added.

As a general point, and given the historical context, it seems more likely that lands have been ceded from the original estate during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, than the opposite. This point of view is perhaps strengthened by the way the estates of the 'lords of Norroway' finally got into Scottish hands. As for Papa, the rights of the absent landowners were simply ignored by Gilbert Mowat and his son James, who, as stated in a document written in the 1630s, 'have intruded themselve in the lands called Papastoure and sindrie uther lands pertaining to the Lords of Norroway and keipis themselves in possession thereof be bangsterie and oppression' (quoted from Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 36). The story at least for the Vaila estate was similar (Smith 1990, 34). It should be added that, with the exception of Busta and Wethersta in Delting, none of the younger sources discussed above list properties that are incongruent with the, admittedly rather general, descriptions used in the deed of 1490. All in all, and excluding the lands in Yell, the available sources seem to give a rather comprehensive view of the estate amassed by Lady Herdis.

Lady Herdis' Shetland estate

With the above-mentioned source-critical reservations, we can reconstruct the estate owned by Herdis Thorvaldsdatter at the time of her death in 1363 (Table 1).

In total, it comprises more than 1300 Shetland marks. The Vaila part is 470 marks, while Papa is 480, and Noss 370. Even if the Vaila and Papa parts seem equal in value, we must remember that no Yell farms are included in the list. Thus the Papa part of the estate might have been considerably larger. Busta and Wethersta, mentioned as belonging to Otte Matsson's part in 1490, are not included, either. The way they are mentioned in the deed of 1490 might seem to suggest that we are dealing with whole townships (for this interpretation, see Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 31). However, other lands specified in the deed are clearly not whole townships. One can compare with Ustanes in Whiteness (provided that Ustanes is what is meant by *Odwristanes* in the older source), which belonged to the Noss part and in 1664 turns out to be a property of 21 marks out of a township valued at 72 marks. The 1490 document does not list any other properties in Whiteness and Weisdale, though, while the feu charter of 1664 lists seven additional, minor properties, which together make up for another 20 marks. The naming of Wethersta and Busta in 1490 may hint at similar, smaller clusters of lands centred on these two, probably larger, properties.

Accordingly, the Papa part might have been considerably larger, and thus significantly bigger than the Vaila part. However, Alv Knutsson, who inherited the Vaila part, seems to have got the better deal regarding the Norwegian part of the estate in 1490 (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 31), and the distribution of the Shetland lands might have been a way of evening out the differences. The reason for the comparatively minor size of the Noss part of the estate may seem more difficult to explain. The better interpretation, to us, is that the three parts in 1490 constituted three distinct and separate—and pre-existing—estates, formally and functionally similar to the Norwegian ones (below).

The undivided estate counted c.180 properties in Shetland, not counting a couple of small islets and three seal waiths, and bearing in mind that we know next to nothing about the Yell part of the estate. 70 of these are valued at 6 marks or more. 6 marks seems a reasonable size for an average tenancy, cf the numbers in Gifford's rental of 1716 (NAS, RH.9/15/176). 45 of the properties in the estate constitute 50 percent or more of the farms/townships where they are located.

Table 1 The estate owned by Herdis Thorvaldsdatter at the time of her death in 1363

TOWNSHIP	DISTRICT	MARKS	ESTATE	OTHER
Vaila	Walls	24	Vaila	—
Brough	Walls	4 1/2	Vaila	—
Scarvister	Walls	3	Vaila	Acquired 1355
Swinland	Walls	3	Vaila	—
Footabrough	Walls	36	Vaila	Acquired 1355
Gord	Walls	3	Vaila	—
Goster	Walls	8	Vaila	—
Vesquoy	Walls	1 1/2	Vaila	Acquired 1355
Elvister	Walls	2 1/2	Vaila	—
Swinister	Walls	2	Vaila	—
Foula	Walls	27	Vaila	—
Grisigarth	Walls	1 1/2	Vaila	—
Watsness	Walls	—	Vaila	Acquired 1355
Reawick	Sandsting	6	Vaila	—
Easter Skeld	Sandsting	4	Vaila	—
Wester Skeld	Sandsting	4 1/2	Vaila	—
Culswick	Sandsting	1 1/2	Vaila	—
Selivoe	Sandsting	4 1/2	Vaila	—
Gruting	Sandsting	9	Vaila	—
West? Burrafirth	Aithsting	10	Vaila	—
'Haffrø'	Aithsting	3	Vaila	—
'Lillehoff'	Aithsting	6 ures	Vaila	—
Tresta	Aithsting	14 1/2	Vaila	—
Noonsbrough	Aithsting	1 1/2	Vaila	—
Clousta	Aithsting	6 ures	Vaila	—
Vementry	Aithsting	4	Vaila	—
Gruna w. The Heag	Aithsting	1 1/2	Vaila	—
'Languaskaail'	Aithsting	2	Vaila	—
Houland	Aithsting	24	Vaila	—
Semblister?	Aithsting	1 1/2	Vaila	—
Norby	Sandness	48	Vaila	—
Melby	Sandness	18	Vaila	—
Huxter	Sandness	1 1/2	Vaila	—
Sneusquoy	Sandness	1	Vaila	—
Bousta	Sandness	9	Vaila	—
Avensgarth?	Northmavine	1	Vaila	—
Burgan	Northmavine	—	Vaila	—
Nissetter	Northmavine	6	Vaila	—
Norwick?	Northmavine	9	Vaila	—
Norwick	Northmavine	7	Papa	—
Breibister	Northmavine	2 5 ures	Papa	—
Houll	Northmavine	7	Papa	—
Houllsquey	Northmavine	3	Papa	—
Houlland	Northmavine	3	Papa	—
Housetter	Northmavine	4 1/2	Papa	—
Oxensetter	Northmavine	4 1/2	Papa	—
Queyfirth	Northmavine	2	Papa	—
Leon	Northmavine	12	Papa	—
Hogan	Northmavine	4	Papa	—
Swinister	Northmavine	4	Papa	—
Corabreck	Northmavine	12	Papa	—
Kingland	Northmavine	6	Papa	—

Table 1 (*cont.*)

TOWNSHIP	DISTRICT	MARKS	ESTATE	OTHER
Eastwick	Northmavine	2 1/2	Papa	—
East Ness	Northmavine	1	Papa	—
Hogaland	Northmavine	15 1/2	Papa	—
Tirvister	Northmavine	3	Papa	—
Sullom	Northmavine	16 2 ures	Papa	—
Haggrister	Northmavine	4	Papa	—
Mangaster	Northmavine	5 1/2	Papa	—
Enisfirth	Northmavine	12	Papa	—
Hamar	Northmavine	1	Papa	—
Tangwick	Northmavine	10 1/2	Papa	—
West Heogaland	Northmavine	19	Papa	—
Stenness	Northmavine	12	Papa	—
Garderhouse	Northmavine	3	Papa	—
Breck	Northmavine	32	Papa	—
‘Owangord’ in Breck	Northmavine	—	Vaila	—
Framgord	Northmavine	13	Papa	—
Framgord	Northmavine	10	Vaila	—
Priesthoulland	Northmavine	7	Vaila	—
Houlland	Northmavine	1	Papa	—
Stow	Northmavine	1	Papa	—
Hamnavoe	Northmavine	32	Papa	—
Lamba	Northmavine	—	Papa	—
‘Sellaos’	Northmavine	—	Papa	—
Lunnister	Northmavine	—	Papa	—
Islesburgh	Northmavine	—	Papa	—
Orbister	Northmavine	—	Papa	—
(Haskasay?)	Yell	—	Papa	—
(Graviland?)	Yell	—	Papa	—
(Gloupe?)	Yell	—	Papa	—
(Guna?)	Yell	—	Papa	—
Uyea	Unst	84?	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Skaw	Unst	2 2 ures	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Valie	Unst	2 1/2	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Dale	Unst	1	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Haaf Gruney	Unst	—	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Papil	Unst	2	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Clibberswick	Unst	8	Vaila	—
Clisboe	Unst	8	Vaila	Acquired 1360?
Stove	Unst	16	Vaila	—
Crookadale	Unst	5 2 ures	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Valsgarth	Unst	—	Vaila	Acquired 1360
‘Griotjord’	Unst	4	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Mewhouse	Unst	1/2	Vaila	—
Bothen	Unst	2	Vaila	—
Langhouse	Unst	2 1/2	Vaila	—
Houstin	Unst	2 2 ures	Vaila	—
Sotland	Unst	3	Vaila	Acquired 1360
Colvadale	Unst	—	Vaila	Acquired 1360
‘Breidaseter’	Unst	—	Vaila	Acquired 1360
<i>Viga?</i>	Unst	—	Vaila	—
Caldback	Unst	2	Vaila	—
<i>Gunasetter</i>	Unst	10	Vaila	—
‘Holmen’	Unst	2	Vaila	—

Table 1 (*cont.*)

TOWNSHIP	DISTRICT	MARKS	ESTATE	OTHER
Watlie?	Unst	3	Vaila	—
Snarravoe	Unst	1	Vaila	—
Cliprigarth	Unst	1	Vaila	—
‘Brewick’	Unst	1/2	Vaila	—
Urie	Fetlar	8 2 ures	Vaila	—
Snabrough	Fetlar	2 2 ures	Vaila	—
<i>Udseter</i>	Fetlar	1	Vaila	—
Colbinstoft	Fetlar	6 ures	Vaila	—
Setter	Fetlar	1	Vaila	—
Aith	Fetlar	6	Vaila	—
Fuzie	Fetlar	2 ures	Vaila	—
Strand	Fetlar	2 1/2	Vaila	—
Seal waiths	Fetlar		Vaila	—
Noss	Bressay	60	Noss	—
Wadbister	Bressay	1 1/2	Noss	—
Kirkebister	Bressay	2	Noss	—
Insista	Bressay	4	Noss	—
Nether Hoversta	Bressay	11	Noss	—
Easterhouse in Hoversta	Bressay	3	Noss	—
Uphouse in Hoversta	Bressay	1	Noss	—
Setter	Bressay	1 1/2	Noss	—
Brough	Bressay	3	Noss	—
Cruester	Bressay	8	Noss	—
Noss sound	Bressay	12	Noss	—
Heogan	Bressay	4	Noss	—
Brow	Dunrossness	6	Noss	—
‘Uttilsgairth’	Dunrossness	10	Noss	—
Brind	Dunrossness	3	Noss	—
Aith	Dunrossness	12	Noss	—
Breiwick	Tingwall	9	Noss	—
North Califf	Tingwall	1/2	Noss	—
Houll	Tingwall	2	Noss	—
Burwick	Tingwall	12	Noss	—
Oversound	Tingwall	18	Noss	—
<i>Utrabuster</i> , Shurton & Sand	Tingwall	4	Noss	—
Brindister & Setter	Tingwall	7	Noss	—
Ustaness	Whiteness & Weisdale	21	Noss	—
Skurron	Whiteness & Weisdale	6 1/2	Noss	—
Kergord	Whiteness & Weisdale	2	Noss	—
Hellister	Whiteness & Weisdale	2	Noss	—
Haggersta	Whiteness & Weisdale	2 1/2	Noss	—
Easthouse and Brekk	Whiteness & Weisdale	3	Noss	—
Greana	Whiteness & Weisdale	2	Noss	—
Flotta	Whiteness & Weisdale	2	Noss	—
Laxo	Delting	4	Noss	—
Laxo	Delting	10	Vaila	—
Wethersta	Delting	—	Papa	—
Busta	Delting	—	Papa	—
Swinister	Delting	6	Noss	—
Burraness	Delting	1	Noss	—
Hardwall	Delting	3	Noss	—
Easter Scord	Delting	3 1/2	Noss	—
Wester Scord	Delting	1	Noss	—

Table 1 (*cont.*)

TOWNSHIP	DISTRICT	MARKS	ESTATE	OTHER
Housabister	Nesting & Lunnasting	2	Noss	—
Newing	Nesting & Lunnasting	2 1/2	Noss	—
Aswick	Nesting & Lunnasting	3 1/2	Noss	—
Outrabister	Nesting & Lunnasting	2	Noss	—
Grunnafirth	Nesting & Lunnasting	7 1/2	Noss	—
Skallister	Nesting & Lunnasting	9	Noss	—
Gardin	Nesting & Skallister	1	Noss	—
Seal waiths	Nesting & Skallister	—	Noss	—
Challister	Whalsay	6	Noss	—
'Westhouse'	Whalsay	3	Noss	—
East? Linga	Whalsay	3 1/2	Noss	—
Nista	Whalsay	2 1/2	Noss	—
Marrister	Whalsay	6	Noss	—
Bruray	Whalsay	6	Noss	—
Symbister	Whalsay	2	Noss	—
Brough	Whalsay	3	Noss	—
'Easterhouse'	Whalsay	1	Noss	—
Skaw	Whalsay	4	Noss	—
<i>Livaseter</i>	Whalsay	1	Noss	—
Seal waiths	Whalsay	—	Noss	—
Bragister	Papa Stour	9	Papa	—
Mid Setter	Papa Stour	9	Papa	—
Setter	Papa Stour	9	Papa	—
Olligert	Papa Stour	4 1/2	Papa	—
Hurdiback	Papa Stour	13 1/2	Papa	—
Evrigert	Papa Stour	9	Papa	—
Sudderhoose	Papa Stour	54	Papa	—
Northoose	Papa Stour	54	Papa	—
Uphoose	Papa Stour	54	Papa	—

Some notes by the superintendent in Bergen, Geble Pedersen, dating to *c.* 1550, states that '18 marks burnt in land is what we call a 'manswerch' in Norway, but in Hieltland it is bigger' (*Shetland Documents 1195–1579*, No. 91). A (post-medieval) 'man's work' in Western Norway was counted as 4 *laupsleie*, and in the mid-seventeenth century 3 *laupsleie* were counted as a 'full' farm. Applied to Shetland, and keeping in mind that this is by no means an accurate comparison, this means that a farm valued at 13.5 marks equals a 'full' farm in Norway. Thus Lady Herdis' Shetland estate equalled *c.* 100 'full' Norwegian farms. But only 21 of her properties were actually valued at 13.5 marks or more.

In Shetland respects, this property of some 1300 marks was an estate of unrivalled size. For the sake of comparison it can be mentioned that 'the lands and barony of Brugh' (Hew Sinclair) in 1607–08 were valued at *c.* 330 marks (*Shetland documents 1580–1611*, nos. 436, 467), while a disposition in 1606 by Lawrence Sinclair of Gott to his son

James Sinclair and James's wife, Christiane, in fulfilment of matrimonial contract, consisted of a little over 100 marks (*Shetland Documents 1580–1611*, No. 419).

Compared to Scandinavian late medieval estates, and using the suggested number of *c.* 70 average tenant farms, Herdis' estate would have placed her on the verge of high nobility in Denmark (80–100 farms), while her estate would have dwarfed the combined estates of a Danish married couple of good standing from the lower nobility, which on average controlled *c.* 50 tenancies (numbers from Ulsig 1968).

Comparative material from Norway puts Herdis Thorvaldsdatter in the very top level among landowners. The Norwegian estate (that is, excluding the Shetland lands) of Hans Sigurdsson (Sigurd Jonsson) consisted of some 600 different properties, large and small (Sandberg 1970, 182), compared to the 180 plus Shetland properties reconstructed here. The rather scarce description in the deed of inheritance of 1490 for the Norwegian estate mirrors the one for the Shetland lands in the same document. The only surviving manorial cadastre from fifteenth-century Norway, that of Hartvig Krummedike, indicates that the accumulated estate at the time of his death in 1476 consisted of 240 larger and smaller properties, which, however, would only have put him in seventeenth place among the largest contemporary estates in Denmark (Benedictow 1970, 31–2, 34). While it has been hypothesized that the Giske estate might have consisted of as many as 200 farms in the late thirteenth century, Lady Herdis' estate compares well with two other estates, namely the Bjarkøy estate, which probably consisted of 18–20 farms in the late medieval period, and the Sudrheim estate, which was *c.* 80 farms (Holmsen 1980, 32, 37, 45).

Origins and organization of the estate

If we take a closer look at the three parts of the Shetland estate discussed in the following, an interesting pattern emerges. As pointed out by Barbara Crawford, 'each family had an island which seems to have functioned as its estate centre and to which other scattered estates on the Mainland of Shetland, or in the other islands were attached' (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 31). The islands in question are Papa Stour in Sandness, Vaila in Walls, and Noss, itself a small island lying off the larger island of Bressay.

All three islands seem to have belonged to the estate in their entirety, but otherwise they do not really compare. The fertile Papa, valued at 216 marks, was obviously much better placed to function as an estate centre in the traditional, manor-wise sense of the term, than was the smaller, but still relatively significant Noss (60 marks), while Vaila with its 27 marks was relatively minor, and not even the largest of the Vaila properties in the parish of Walls.

On the other hand, Crawford's suggestion, that scattered estates around Shetland were attached to these three centres, seems to imply too loose a system. While stray properties were indeed a significant part of all three estates, there is a rather clear, and somewhat different, structure to them. Let us first look at the estate centred on Papa (for the following, see Table 2).

Table 2 Details of the estate centred on Papa Stour

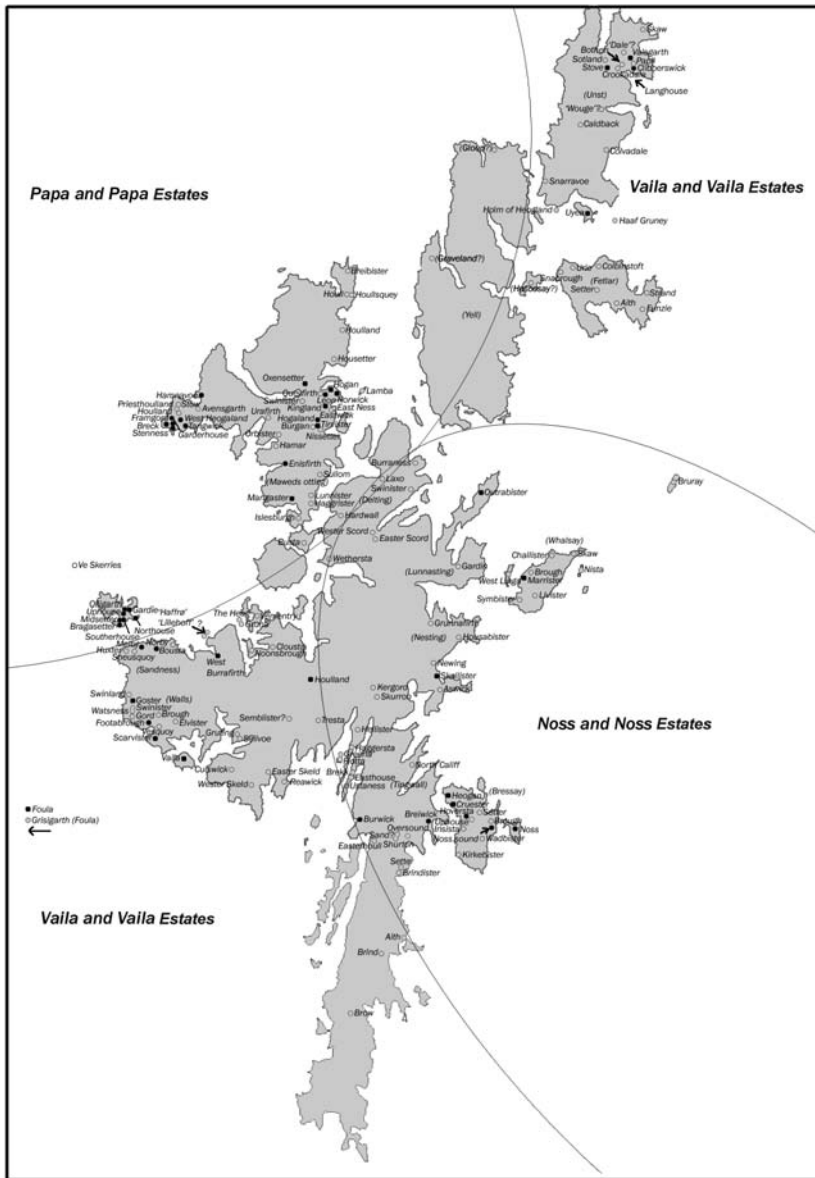
	District	No. of marks belonging to estate	No. of properties belonging to estate	Percentage of estate constituted by major (50–100%) parts of townships	Percentage of district controlled by estate
VAILA ESTATE C. 480 MARKS	Walls	116	12	86	24
	Sandsting & Aithsting	91,5	17	37	12
	Sandness	77,5	5	74	41
	Northmavine	33	7	—	3
	Unst	161	23	69	8
NOSS ESTATE C. 370 MARKS	Bressay	120	12	88	34
	Dunrossness	31	4	—	2
	Tingwall	52,5	7	40	4
	Whiteness & Weisdale	41	8	—	6
	Delting	18,5	6	—	2
	Nesting, Lunnasting & Whalsay	65,5	18	26	8
PAPA ESTATE C. 470 MARKS	Papa Stour	216	9	100	100
	Northmavine	254	36	71	22
	Yell	?	?	?	?

216 marks, 46% of the known lands of the Papa estate, were situated on Papa Stour itself. The rest of the known Papa estate, 254 marks, however, were not really stray properties found around the islands, but were located in two clusters in Northmavine; one, totalling a little over 120 marks, in Eshaness on the western coast, facing Papa Stour, and another one, valued at 70 marks, clustered in and around the scattald of Ollaberry on the east coast. All together, the Papa 'centre' controlled 36 properties in Northmavine, 22 of which were situated in these two limited areas. Of the 16 properties in Northmavine, which constitute 50% or more of the farms/townships where they are located, no less than 14 are situated in Eshaness and Ollaberry, seven in each.

So if we include Papa itself, the estate comprised three large and separate 'blocks' of land, with a relatively insignificant number of smaller pieces of property scattered in neighbouring areas. This, we might add, seems to be a similar structure to the one often characterising the larger estates in Norway in the late medieval period.

As for Noss, a rather similar, but not as clear a structure emerges. Of the 370 marks belonging to the Noss estate, 120 (including Noss itself at 60) are situated in townships in Bressay, where 34% of the lands belonged to the estate. Another 53.5 marks were situated in the neighbouring district of Tingwall. The rest of the properties are spread out over the eastern and north-eastern districts in Mainland, with 65.5 more marks situated in the districts immediately to the north of Tingwall, that is Nesting, Lunnasting and Whalsay. All these areas are readily accessible from Noss by sea. To the south of Tingwall, a rather extensive area of the Mainland, the Noss estate owned only four, all of them minor properties. There is as good as no overlap in the geographical distribution of lands belonging to the Noss estate and either of the other two estates. Even if the cluster of holdings in Bressay and Noss cannot really compare with Papa, it still represents a definite core area within an estate that is much more compressed than the impression one gets from the available literature.

What about 'Vaila and Vailaguids', then? To begin with, it is not as localised as the other two estates. Instead, there are two distinct distribution areas; the western part of the Mainland (Walls, Sandness) and the islands in the northeast (Unst, Fetlar). The map (Illus. 10) shows distinct clusters of major holdings in the Haroldswick area in Unst and in Walls. These look like core areas similar to the ones in Papa, Northmavine and Bressay. In a way they are, but the picture still looks



Illus. 10 Map of the Shetland Estates of Herdis Thorvaldsdatter.

very different from what we have discussed regarding Papa and Noss. The reason for this is that the deeds for many of the properties in just these two core areas have survived. As we have seen above, Herdis Thorvaldsdatter bought lands on two separate occasions—in 1355 and again in 1360. These two transactions added some 150 marks of land to her estate.

The first acquisition gave her Footabrough and three other properties in Walls. The Footabrough property (36 marks) purchased in 1355 was the biggest of Lady Herdis' lands in Walls, with only Vaila and Foula approaching a similar size. If we exclude the properties bought in 1355, Walls does not look much like a core area. Similarly, for Unst, the transaction of 1360 is the only reason for the cluster of lands in Haroldswick. The largest property by far belonging to the Vaila estate in Unst, the island of Uyea, was also part of the same transaction. Without these lands in Unst and the ones in Walls, the Vaila estate appears first and foremost as a collection of smaller pieces of properties widely distributed across Shetland. There are still a few larger properties, and these are mainly found in Sandness and Walls, but there is no 'core' of clustered, big properties comparable to the ones we find in Papa Stour and, to a lesser degree, in Noss/Bressay. Without the lands added in 1355 and 1360, the size of the Vaila estate would be on par with the Noss estate.

Another document of 1355 seems to imply that Herdis was selling necessary lands, as well (*Shetland Documents 1195–1579*, No. 10, cf. DN I, 340). In Shetland, as in the Norwegian kingdom at large, the udal lands were not inalienable, as was the case for instance in Denmark, where changes in the composition of aristocratic estates were almost exclusively due to intra-aristocratic transactions (Benedictow 1970, 13).

The two deeds of 1355/1360 are the only ones we have for the extensive estate controlled by Lady Herdis. Perhaps it is significant that both the transactions that we know her to have been involved in deal with the Vaila part of the estate. It is possible that this signifies a different status for this part of the estate than for the other two. But is the tripartite division that is documented in 1490, relevant for discussing the situation in Herdis' own lifetime?

The chances are that it is. The formulaic 'Papa and Papa gods' etc. is the common way of denoting manor farms (Norwegian *setegårder*) and the lands belonging to them in the Norwegian language in the time period in question (fourteenth to sixteenth centuries). Furthermore, there are many examples of such estates being understood and managed as

discrete entities even if they were swallowed up by bigger landowners with more extensive estates. Even if the Æri estate in Western Norway was passed on to two successive families in Eastern Norway and remained in their possession as a part of two different (and larger) estates for two or three generations in the late thirteenth and early to middle part of the fourteenth century, it was managed as a discrete estate during the whole period and always called 'Æri gods'. Two years after the Reformation in 1537, Truid Ulfstand on behalf of his wife Gørvel Fadersdatter demanded that 'Nausdall og Nausdals gotzs' should be returned to her from the cathedral in Bergen (DN IV, 1115). A similar demand was raised for 'Torgar og Torgar gods' in Northern Norway, c. 1533. The latter was not granted, since it was found that it had been owned by seven successive archbishops (in Trondheim), without anyone else claiming ownership over it (DN IV, 1101, see also Iversen 1999, 58).

Thus it would not be at all surprising if the division documented in the deed of inheritance of 1490 reflects the situation in the mid-fourteenth century, even if the (suggested) three separate estates had then been part of the bigger Sudrheim-Giske estate for more than one hundred years. The most likely reason why the Norwegian lesser estates were often kept as such, even if they were bought or inherited into much larger estates, seems to us to be that they were regularly *organised* as estates, too, with a central manor surrounded by smaller, dependent farms and with other attached properties at a greater distance. Even if it was just for collecting the yearly rent, this might—in a time and place with relatively modest means of communication—be looked upon as the best way of structuring much bigger estates, as well, thus leading to what are in effect multi-polar estates.

We suggest, then that Lady Herdis' Shetland estate was a multi-polar one, and that it comprised three discrete estates, probably with different origins, and each perhaps having once been an independent holding. The Papa estate has a structure that might point to this being a multi-polar estate in itself. As for what kind of origins the three estates had, it can hardly be more than an educated guess. It is certain that Papa Stour was controlled by the Norwegian king at the end of the thirteenth century, and that it was passed on to Thorvald Thoresson or one of his children in the early part of the fourteenth. Many noble families in the service of the king expanded their estates through the money and position they got as *lendmenn* or *sysselmenn* (Skre 1998, 62).

Crawford's hypothesis, that the Papa estate belonged to the Orkney earls before Shetland was put under direct royal control in 1195, seems a distinct possibility (Crawford 2002, 20). But one should not forget that much of the lands that the Norwegian king gave away as gifts, or re-disposed of in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were properties that had only recently come under royal control (Bjørkvik 1968, 133). The Noss estate might have a similar background, and it is possible that it was managed alongside the Papa estate for a considerable period of time before it got into Lady Herdis' hands. The similarities between these two estates and many of the royal and aristocratic estates found in Western Norway when it comes to structure and situation on islands at or near major sea routes, are interesting, and could be a pattern with roots in the Viking Age (cf. Bjørkvik 1958).

The Vaila estate seems to have a different background. It hardly approaches the estate model found in Papa and Noss, or the examples we have mentioned from Norway. This might be Lady Herdis' own lands, perhaps put together piece by piece through a combination of inherited stray properties, gifts from her husband(s), and bought lands. What little overlap there is between the three estates in the lady's possession, in all three instances involves the Vaila estate (Laxo in Delting, Framgord and perhaps Priesthoulland in Northmavine). This might suggest that there has been a certain degree of adjustment between the Vaila estate and more peripheral areas of the other two.

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‘THESE PEOPLE WERE HIGH-BORN AND THOUGHT
A LOT OF THEMSELVES’:
THE FAMILY OF MODDAN OF DALE

Gareth Williams

One of the distinctive features of the sagas is a tendency to include genealogies of central characters, especially where particular families play an important part in the saga over several generations. *Orkneyinga saga* is no exception to this, although in a somewhat more restrained form than some of the Icelandic family sagas, in which the compilers were clearly determined not to let the story get in the way of a good genealogy. The opening chapters of *Orkneyinga saga* combine genealogy and mythology to establish the antecedents of the earls of Møre (ON *Mærr*), before moving to a more ostensibly historical account of the establishment of the earldom of Orkney by the Møre dynasty, although the historical accuracy of the saga has not been unchallenged, especially in the early chapters, which continue to include a strong mythological element.¹ The genealogy of the earls is a recurrent theme throughout the saga, and necessarily so, given the proportion of the saga which is occupied by feuding and conflict between different family members. Especially given the tendency to repeat names within families, it is important to establish family relationships clearly in order to remind the reader/listener why one family member might suddenly decide to murder another.

In addition to the line of the earls, the saga also provides details of various other family relationships, although over fewer generations than in some of the Family Sagas. This notably occurs with two main groups in the twelfth century, by which time most scholars have accepted that the saga is somewhat more historically reliable. The first of these groups is a listing of the leading families of Orkney, and their landholdings. Many of these were related to the earldom family, and to each other.² The other is an extraordinary family which, after the

¹ Meulengracht Sørensen (1993); Williams (1999).

² *OS*, ch. 56, pp. 119–22.

death of St Magnús, plays almost as central a role in the saga as the direct earldom line. This is the family of Moddan of Dale, described as a rich and honoured man (*göfugr maðr ok vellauðigr*).³ (Illus. 11) One branch of his family developed a claim to the earldom through the relationship between earl Hákon Pálsson and Moddan's daughter Helga, which resulted in a son, Haraldr Smooth-Talker (*sléttmáli*), who became earl, as (briefly) did his son Erlendr, and a daughter Margaret, whose son Haraldr Maddaðarson is described at the conclusion of the saga as one of the three most powerful of all the earls of Orkney.⁴ Another of Moddan's daughters was Frakökk, one of the great villains of the saga, who had no direct claim to the earldom, but who nevertheless attempted to claim it on behalf of her descendants, and especially her grandson Ölvir Brawl (*rósta*). Another daughter, Þorleif, plays no direct part in the saga, beyond producing a daughter who went on to produce a son and daughter herself. Moddan's son, Engus (Angus) the Generous (*inn örvi*), is only mentioned once, and plays no part in the story, while another son, Óttarr jarl of Thurso, is a curiously shadowy figure, often somewhat removed from the rest of the family, but described as 'a man worthy of honour' (*göfugr maðr*).⁵

Following the death of Haraldr Smooth-Talker, apparently the accidental victim of a plot to murder his half-brother Páll, Helga and Frakökk retreated to Frakökk's estates in Sutherland, where a number of the younger generation of the family were brought up together. As the saga tells us, 'All these people were high-born and thought a lot of themselves' (*Þessir menn váru allir ættstórir [ok] miklir fyrir sér*).⁶ Helga's offspring obviously had some case for this, as descendants of the earldom family, especially since both of her daughters married well, Ingibjörg to Óláfr Titbit (*bitling*),⁷ king of the Suðreyjar,⁸ and Margaret

³ OS, ch. 53, p. 114.

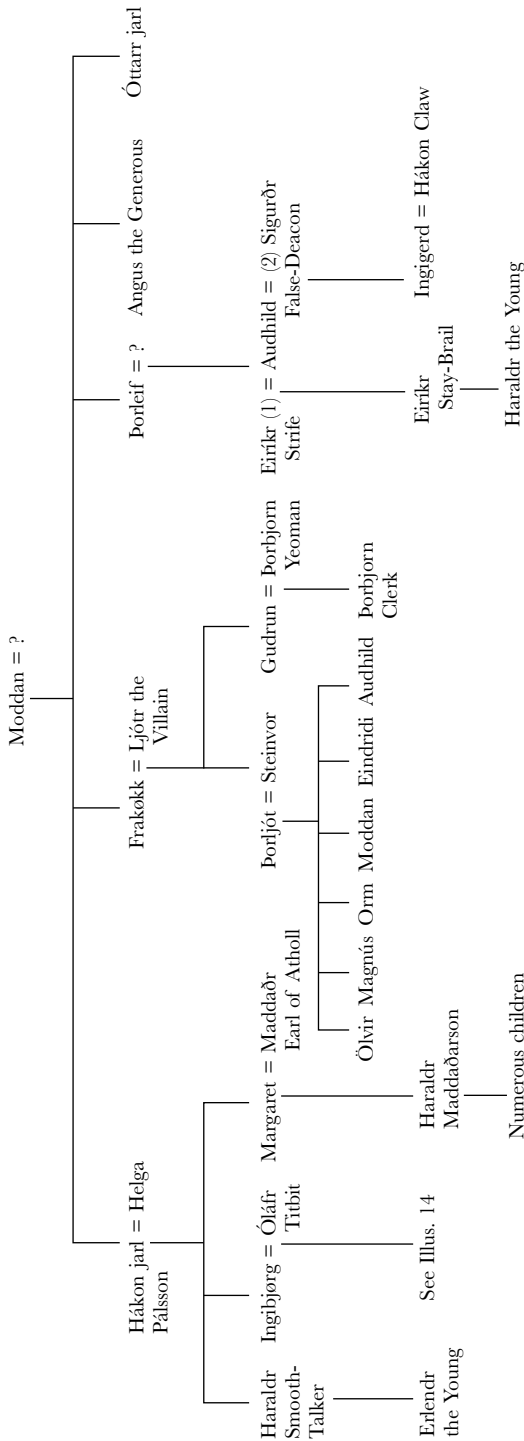
⁴ OS, ch. 53, pp. 114–5; ch. 63, p. 143; ch. 112, p. 298.

⁵ OS, ch. 55, p. 119.

⁶ OS, ch. 55, p. 119.

⁷ According to the *Cronica Regum Manniae et Insularum* (CRMI), Óláfr was married to a woman called Affrica, but had several concubines. It may be that the status of Ingibjörg's relationship with Óláfr was viewed differently in Orkney and Man. Since *Orkeneyinga saga* suggests that Helga's relationship with Hákon was not a formal marriage, but nevertheless formed the basis for her family's claim to the earldom, it seems quite likely that they would have similarly played up the importance of any relationship with the king of the Isles.

⁸ The name Suðreyjar (Southern Isles) is applied in Old Norse to the Western Isles of Scotland, sometimes, but not always, including the Isle of Man. In some references



Illus. 11 The family of Moddan of Dale.

to Maddaðr, earl of Atholl.⁹ Why, however, did the lines of Frakökk and Þorleif have such exalted opinions of themselves, and how did Óttarr of Thurso come to bear the title of jarl?¹⁰ How too, did the family exercise so much influence over events in the twelfth century, especially in Caithness and Sutherland?

The starting point for any consideration of the family's importance must be Moddan himself. *Orkneyinga saga* tells us only that 'At that time when Hákon jarl held power in the Orkneys, there lived in Dale in Caithness a man called Moddan, a rich and honoured man.'¹¹ Although his son Óttarr is given the title of jarl, there is no suggestion that Moddan himself had the same title. In itself, that need not be particularly significant. As shown in the cases of Rögnvaldr Kali and Haraldr Maddaðarson, the title to the Orkney earldom could skip a generation and pass through a female line, and it is therefore conceivable that either Moddan himself or his wife (who is never mentioned) was a descendant of the earldom line. The only evidence for or against this is circumstantial, but cumulatively does suggest that it is unlikely. Firstly, the only claim within his family to the earldom of Orkney which is ever cited in the saga is the connection through Haraldr Smooth-Talker. If Frakökk had a claim through either of her parents, it is surprising that the saga never mentions it. In corroboration of this, chapter 56 of the saga provides a lengthy listing of the leading families

it is unclear whether Man included or not. Given the changing political divisions in this area in the tenth to twelfth centuries, there is not space within this article to explore exactly what is meant in each instance, so I have used the form *Suðreyjar* throughout, although I have normally given modern forms of other place-names.

⁹ See n. 3 above.

¹⁰ A full discussion of the meaning of the term *jarl* would require an article in itself. Roughly translating as 'earl', it is represented in Latin by both *dux* and *comes*, and is also apparently used in a Scottish context to represent both the Gaelic *mormaer* ('great steward') and the feudal earls of the twelfth century. In a Norse context it normally appears to mean a member of a family with established status as jarls, who was personally in a position to claim the title, and more than one member of the family could hold the title at the same time. It was apparently not always territorially based. Exactly what the title implied in terms of power and responsibility is not important here. More important for the current discussion is the fact that it usually seems to have required a family connection, rather than simply being appointed by a king, although several jarls of Orkney and Caithness sought recognition of their position from Norwegian and Scottish kings respectively. In Caithness, the title was subject to both Norse and Scottish tradition and it is unclear exactly what is meant. It is quite possible that Scottish kings and Norse jarls had a very different understanding of their mutual relationship.

¹¹ OS, ch. 53, p. 114. '*Í þenna tíma, er Hákon jarl hafði ríki í Orkneyjum, þjó sá maðr í Dali á Katanesi, er Moddan hét, gefugr maðr ok vellaðigr*'.

on Orkney, mentioning both their landholdings and (where appropriate) their relationship to the earldom line. No member of Moddan's family is mentioned, and the implication is both that they held no lands in Orkney and that they had no connection with the earldom line other than through Helga's relationship to Haraldr. This is further strengthened by the fact that the saga account consistently places the family in Caithness and Sutherland. A final point is that Óttarr jarl is never described as making any direct claim on the earldom of Orkney, although his own position in Thurso was apparently unchallenged, and he was regarded as a 'man worthy of honour' (*göfugr maðr*). He was also sufficiently powerful that the unruly Sveinn Ásleifarson felt it appropriate to make an accommodation with him and even (eventually) to abide by it.¹² All of this suggests that the power base of both Moddan and Óttarr was firmly in Caithness/Sutherland, and not in Orkney.

Caithness and Sutherland

Does this mean, therefore, that Óttarr's title of jarl came through a Scottish line in Caithness itself? This cannot be ruled out. The earlier chapters of *Orkneyinga saga* include frequent references to conflict between the Orkney jarls and native rulers in the north of Scotland, and the domination of Caithness by the Orkney jarls seems to have been in question until the reign of Þorfinn the Mighty, only a few generations before the period under discussion.¹³ Furthermore, the saga's account of the period in between is heavily dominated by matters in Orkney, and even Norway, while Caithness receives little attention. In addition, Moddan and his children have a mixture of Norse and Scottish names, in contrast to the purely Norse names of most of the inhabitants of Orkney mentioned in the saga. This does not prove noble blood, but does suggest at least a mixed descent.

Given the tendency to repeat family names, it is tempting to link Moddan with an earlier 'Muddan' or 'Mutadan', described as the nephew of the Scottish king 'Karl Hundason'. The saga tells us that Muddan was made jarl of Caithness by Karl.¹⁴ There are arguments

¹² OS, ch. 74, pp. 167–8; ch. 92, p. 244.

¹³ Crawford (1987), pp. 65–7, 71–9.

¹⁴ OS, ch. 20, p. 44.

both for and against this suggestion, which is complicated by the fact that *Orkneyinga saga* is probably rather less reliable for the eleventh century than for the twelfth. Historians are divided as to the identity of Karl Hundason, unrecorded in Scottish sources and possibly a derogatory nickname,¹⁵ but the internal chronology of the saga places the conflict between Karl Hundason and Þorfinn the Mighty (and therefore Muddan's tenure of Caithness) in the 1030s. Moddan was old enough to have adult children in the reign of Hákon Pálsson of Orkney in the early twelfth century, and while the saga's dating evidence is fairly imprecise on this point, it seems unlikely that Moddan can have been born later than the 1070s, suggesting a gap of two or three generations between him and Muddan.

The association is obviously speculative, and entirely circumstantial. In favour, we have firstly the similarity of the names. Since *Orkneyinga saga* tends to mangle Scottish names somewhat, it is possible to see Moddan and Muddan as two versions of the same name, and repetition of a family name two or three generations later would be fairly typical for the period. It is also notable that Muddan apparently based himself at Thurso, which seems to have later been the power base of Óttarr jarl.¹⁶ Finally, there is the fact that Óttarr's title of jarl is never disputed but does not appear to be based in Orkney, which would be consistent with descent from a family of appropriate status in Caithness.

However, there are also arguments to be made against this association. Muddan (if the evidence of the saga is correct) ruled only very briefly in Caithness before being killed, and was imposed from outside, rather than having a local power-base. It does not seem particularly likely that any surviving descendants would have remained in the area as a wealthy and powerful family through the rest of the reign of Þorfinn the Mighty and his successors, although Muddan's title might, perhaps, have formed the base of a later claim from descendants from outside the area. Further, despite their superficial similarity, it is unlikely that Muddan and Moddan represent the same name. Simon Taylor (pers. comm.) suggests that Moddan is the Gaelic name *Mo Aedán*, whereas Muddan is a diminutive form based on Old Irish *múad* 'noble'. This distinction may not, of course, have been clear to the compilers of *Orkneyinga saga*, especially since the saga does not now survive in its

¹⁵ Crawford (1987), pp. 71–2; Cowan (1993); Marsden (1997), pp. 172–207.

¹⁶ OS, ch. 20, pp. 48–9; ch. 55, p. 119.

original form. However, if the names are distinct, that would remove the argument for repetition of a dynastic name as evidence of a family connection.

The association with Thurso could also be entirely coincidental, simply reflecting the lasting importance of the settlement (sited on a good natural harbour), especially since in the twelfth century only Óttarr is associated with Thurso, while his father Moddan is described more vaguely as living in 'Dale' (*i Dali*). Furthermore, Moddan himself is never described as jarl, nor is there any mention of other native Caithness jarls between the 1030s and Jarl Óttarr. Interestingly, Óttarr himself is never described as jarl of Caithness, and Thurso itself, or even Thurso Dale, seems too small to justify a territorially-based earldom. *Orkneyinga saga* does provide examples of two or more jarls ruling jointly, both in Orkney and Caithness, but this generally seems to have entailed a physical division of the earldom, especially by the twelfth century. The appellation of jarl seems in Óttarr's case to represent his personal status, rather than any wider claim to authority (at least in those areas covered by the saga). It is possible that the family was of established 'jarl' stock, and that Óttarr was simply the first member of the family in several generations to be powerful enough to claim the title. However, a more plausible explanation is that Moddan was, as the saga tells us, simply a rich man, perhaps on a comparable level with the various farmer chieftains of Orkney who appear throughout the saga.

The place-name 'Dale' in Caithness is mentioned in *Njáls saga*, in the context of the attempts of Sigurðr the Stout (*inn digri*) to establish control over Caithness in the late tenth century. *Njáls saga* states that Sigurðr's dominions in Scotland included Ross and Moray, Sutherland and the Dales (*Ros ok Myræfi, Syðri-lönd ok Dali*).¹⁷ Barbara Crawford has argued that this is a reference to the Dales of Caithness, 'that part of Caithness which includes the river valleys running down towards the Pentland Firth'. This, Crawford argues, was distinct from Caithness proper in this period, which was confined to the area of north-eastern Caithness around Duncansby Head, with the name Caithness only applied later to the wider area now associated with the name. Crawford argues on the basis of both *Orkneyinga saga* and *Njáls saga* that this narrower area of Caithness was still in the hands of native rulers in the tenth century.¹⁸

¹⁷ *NS*, ch. 86, pp. 206–7.

¹⁸ Crawford (1987), pp. 65–66.

The Dales of *Njáls saga* are in the plural, whereas Moddan is identified with a single Dale in the twelfth century, but it seems likely that this particular dale was within the larger Dales area. The area also includes Thurso, where Óttarr jarl was based, and it is possible that Dale or 'the Dale' may be identified as Thurso Dale. If the native rulers of the tenth century were also associated with the Dales, it would provide at least circumstantial evidence for a family association. However, as mentioned, *Njáls saga* attributes control of the Dales to Sigurðr, while the tenth-century native rulers seem to have controlled the north-eastern corner of Caithness around Duncansby. These rulers are described as jarls or kings in the sagas, most of whom can probably be identified as mormaers of Moray, although Dungadr jarl (who may have given his name to Duncansby) appears to have been based in that part of north-eastern Caithness which Crawford argues was (initially at least) beyond the control of the Orkney earls.¹⁹

In the twelfth century the political situation had effectively reversed. Moddan was based in Dale, although it is unclear how wide an area he controlled, and Óttarr is associated only with Thurso, not more widely with the Dales. Duncansby, however, was not in the hands of this family, but in the hands of an Orkney chieftain called Óláfr Hrólfsson, who seems to have held the farm from the earls, rather than as an established family possession. The feud between the families of Moddan and Óláfr is a recurrent feature of the twelfth century, while several of the earls were directly involved in matters in Caithness. The family does not seem to have had the sort of undisputed authority across Caithness that would allow them to claim the title of jarl without a firmly established precedent.

The family also had a power base at Helmsdale in Sutherland. This was apparently inland, somewhere along the 'dale' of Helmsdale, rather than at the modern village of Helmsdale, since it always appears to be approached by land, whether from north or south, although the modern village is accessible by sea. This was remote from Orkney, and may well have been beyond the borders of earldom control in Caithness. It was here that Frakökk and her sister Helga retreated after they were banished from Orkney, here that Rögnvaldr Kali's envoys found Frakökk and allied with her against Páll, and here that Frakökk was eventually killed by Sveinn Ásleifarson in revenge for the killing

¹⁹ Crawford (1987), p. 64.

of his father. Caithness provided a buffer of sorts between Orkney and this part of Sutherland, and it is interesting that Sveinn's attack was made from the south, via Atholl, avoiding both Caithness and Sutherland on the way. The implication is that the family had control of the land routes from the north to Frakökk's estates, and depending on how extensive the family estates in Caithness were, it is possible that the Caithness estates and the Sutherland estates were contiguous, especially given the geographical pairing of the Dales and Sutherland in *Njáls saga* (Illus. 12).

The extent of the Helmsdale estate is unclear, as is their fate after the death of Frakökk and the flight of Ölvir, although Crawford has suggested that they covered most of Sutherland, and that they were inherited by Frakökk's great nephew Eirík Stay-brail (*stagbrellr*) and subsequently by his son Haraldr the Young, before passing to the de Moravia family following the death of the latter.²⁰ However, Crawford may exaggerate the extent of Frakökk's holdings, and while the Sutherland estates may have been a source of wealth as well as a refuge, it is unlikely that this was the main basis of the family's status and self-esteem. The only member of the family mentioned as holding land in Sutherland is Frakökk, and the saga states explicitly that she was married to Ljótr the Villain (*níðingr*) who lived in Sutherland,²¹ and the Sutherland estates probably came through this marriage. This cannot in any case explain Óttarr's title, and Ljótr's nickname also makes him an unlikely source for family pride. It seems likely that the main source of the family's self-esteem was the noble ancestry which permitted Óttarr's title, although wealth may of course have been an additional factor.

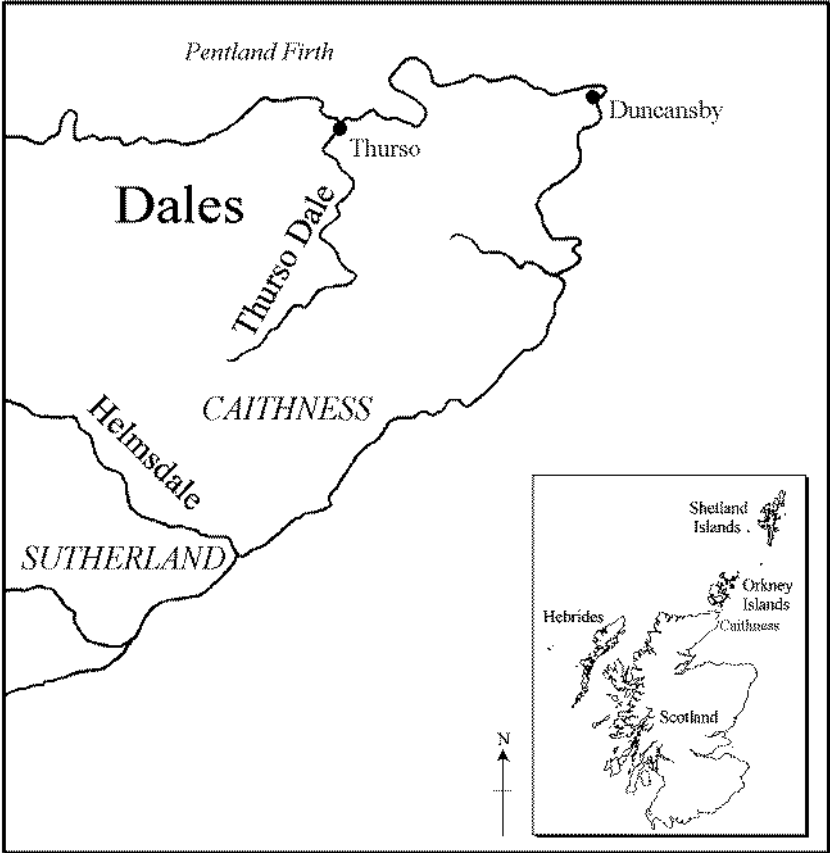
The Suðreyjar

During the short-lived alliance between Rögnvaldr Kali and Frakökk against Páll, Frakökk and Ölvir are said to have raised a force in the Suðreyjar (Man and the Hebrides) to invade Orkney,²² suggesting either that the Suðreyjar formed part of their power-base, or that they

²⁰ Crawford (1976–7), p. XX.

²¹ *OS*, ch. 53, p. 114.

²² *OS*, ch. 63–4, p. 144.



Illus. 12 Caithness and Sutherland, showing locations mentioned in the text (not to scale).

were able to attract mercenaries there. However, it is possible that the Hebridean connection may simply be a red herring. The Suðreyjar are mentioned repeatedly throughout the saga, either as a target for raids or conquest by jarls and other chieftains from the Orkney earldom, or as a source of men for attacks on the Orkney earldom. It is perfectly plausible that any or all of these episodes may have some foundation in fact. Being relatively close to the earldom but only rarely under direct earldom control, the Suðreyjar would make a good base for fugitives, and would also provide a convenient target for earldom expansion, or for raiding by individual chieftains from Orkney and Caithness (Illus. 13). At the same time, one must be wary in the sagas of a tendency towards the use of established motifs. While there remains some debate as to exactly where *Orkneyinga saga* was composed, there is certainly at the very least a strong awareness of Orcadian tradition, and if there was an Orcadian tradition of the Suðreyjar as a haunt of ne'er-do-wells, this would provide an alternative explanation for the references within *Orkneyinga saga*, including those to do with Moddan's family. This is, of course, speculative, but the possibility should not be excluded.²³

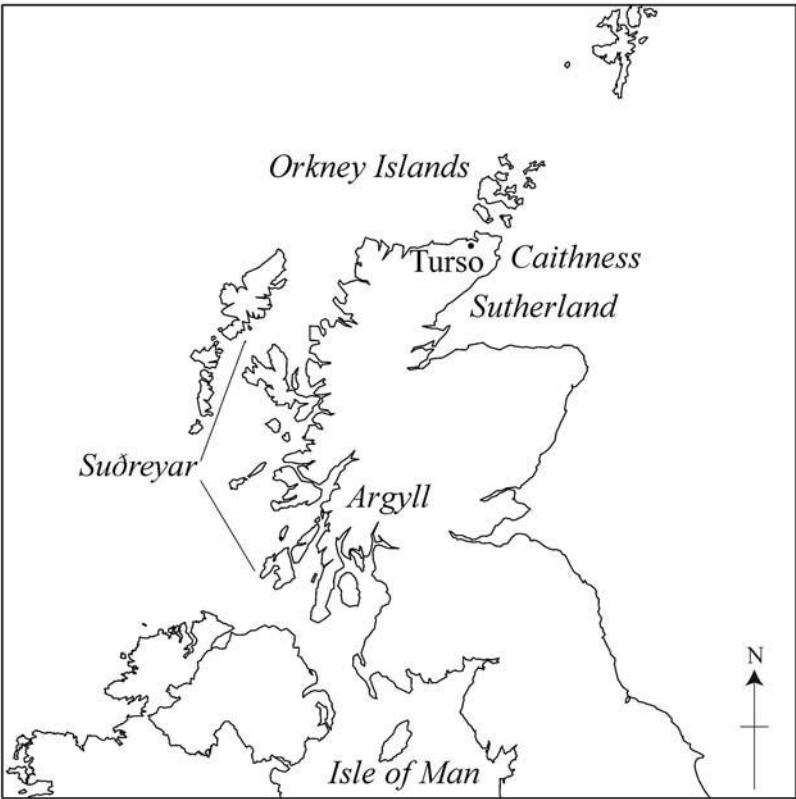
Nevertheless, if the saga is to be believed, there was some form of dynastic alliance between Frakökk's family and Óláfr Titbit, king of the Suðreyjar, through Frakökk's niece Ingibjörg, whether or not this was a regular marriage.²⁴ Furthermore, the foster-father of Ingibjörg's brother Erlendr was a man called Anakol, who is described as 'a Viking, a ruthless man of Hebridean origins with a good family background'.²⁵ The name is Gaelic (cf OIr *anacol* or *anacul* 'protection'),²⁶ although he is described as a Viking, suggesting the same sort of mixed-race descent as Moddan's own family (Illus. 14). Given the marriage alliance with Óláfr, it is entirely plausible that Moddan's family would have contacts with the important families in the Suðreyjar that supported Óláfr's kingship. This would provide a plausible political context for Ölvir's

²³ There does appear to be an Icelandic tradition of Hebrideans as unsavoury characters, but within this tradition they are normally associated with supernatural events, and there is no such association where any of the Hebrideans in *Orkneyinga saga* are concerned.

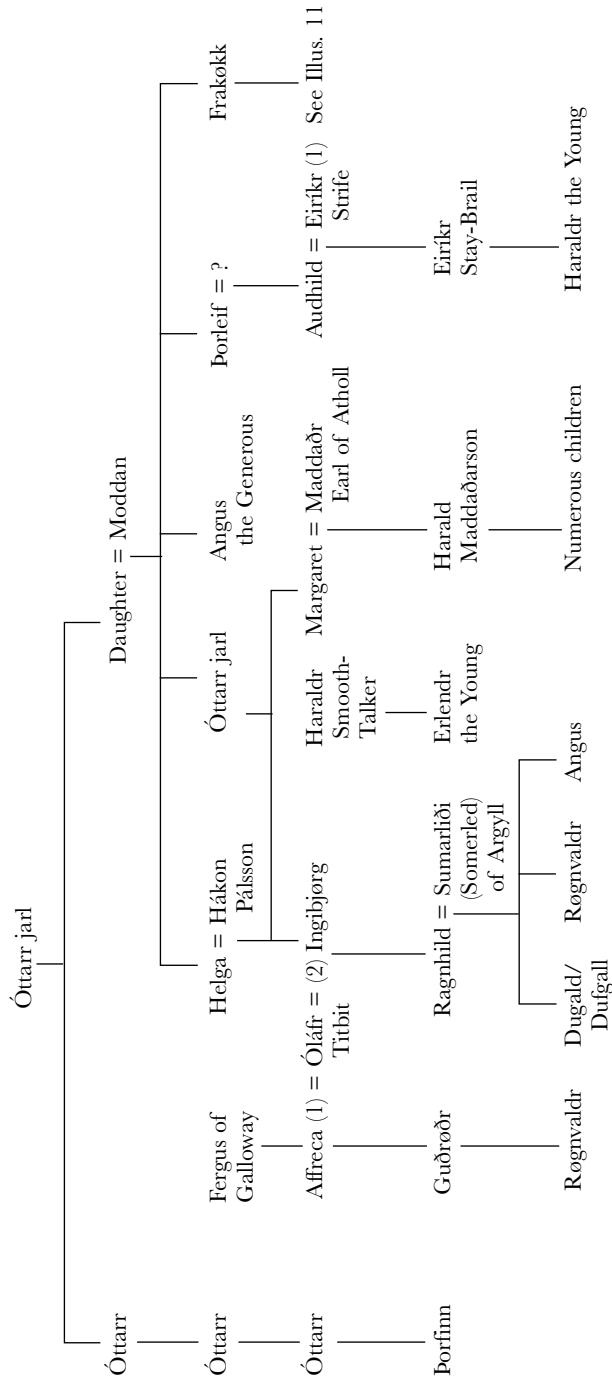
²⁴ Sellar (2000) argues that a degree of polygamy appears to have been acceptable among high-status families in Norse Scotland (and the same is certainly true for Norway, on saga evidence), and that the distinction between wives and concubines may be over-rigid.

²⁵ OS Ch. 92, p. 241.

²⁶ Simon Taylor (pers. comm.).



Illus. 13 Scandinavian Scotland in the late twelfth century (not to scale).



Illus. 14 Speculative family tree, showing proposed relationships between the families of Ótarr jarl of Man, Moddan of Dale, Óláfr Tübit of the Suðreyjar and Sumarliði of Argyll.

ability to raise troops in the area, but would not in itself provide any solution to the 'high-born' claims of Moddan's family, or Óttarr's claim to be called jarl.

However, turning to the *Suðreyjar* does provide some circumstantial evidence from a variety of sources which might explain Óttarr's status. In addition to the royal line of Man and the Isles, of which Óláfr was a representative, the *Chronicle of Man* refers repeatedly to chieftains within the kingdom, who appear to have had comparable status to the great Orkney chieftains, many of whom, as discussed above, had family ties to the Orkney earls.²⁷ What is striking in *Man and the Isles* is the recurrence of the name Óttarr amongst the most powerful chieftains in the region in sources from all around the Irish Sea. Furthermore, while Óttarr is a fairly common Scandinavian name, the references make it clear that this was a family name, within a high-ranking dynasty, and the first of these Óttarrs to appear held the title of *comes*, a Latin equivalent of Old Norse *jarl*.

Nothing is stated of this Óttarr's origins, but the *Chronicle* tells us that he ruled half of Man, and was killed there in 1098.²⁸ He is the only Óttarr from the Isles to be specifically described as jarl, and there is no explicit statement that the other Óttarrs who are mentioned are directly related to him, but it is clear that he was one of the most important chieftains within the kingdom, and both this status and the date of his death are consistent with a family which appear in Manx, Irish and Welsh sources in the mid-twelfth century, neatly bracketing chronologically the section of *Orkneyinga saga* under discussion. The first of these to appear is an Óttarr from the Isles who, though not given the title of jarl, was powerful enough to seize control of the kingdom of Dublin in 1142.²⁹ He is described as the grandson of Óttarr (Mac mic Ottir) in the *Annals of the Four Masters* (sub 1142) and as the son of Óttarr (McOtyr) in the *Annals of Clonmacnoise* (sub 1134 = 1142). It is unclear whether one version is muddled, and, if so, which, but it is possible that both versions are correct, and that he was Óttarr son of Óttarr son of Óttarr. Assuming that both he and the Óttarr jarl killed in 1098 were grown men at the points at which they enter the historical record, the later Óttarr could plausibly be either the son or

²⁷ Williams (1996), pp. 256–64.

²⁸ *CRMI*, sub 1098.

²⁹ Duffy (1992), pp. 121–3.

the grandson of the earlier Óttarr, although the latter seems more likely. This later Óttarr survived in control of Dublin until he was killed in 1148.³⁰ Within the period of his control of Dublin, there is also a reference to an Óttarr, apparently based in Dublin, campaigning as a mercenary in Wales, in 1144. This Óttarr is described as 'son of the other Óttarr' (*ofter vab ofter arall*) in the *Brut y Tywysogyon*.³¹ This could be the Óttarr who ruled Dublin (confirming the Clonmacnoise version of his being the son of Óttarr) or, given that the phrase 'the other Óttarr' implies that this latter is a known figure, it may be that *ofter arall* refers to the Óttarr who ruled in Dublin, in which case the Óttarr who campaigned in Wales would be his son. This potentially gives us Óttarr son of Óttarr son of Óttarr son of Óttarr. Depending on how one interprets the combination of the Irish and Welsh sources, there must be at least two Óttarrs in this family, and perhaps as many as four, all apparently of high status. The earlier Óttarr jarl of Man may or may not be the first of these (and could even extend the line to five consecutive Óttarrs), but the use of the same name is unlikely to be coincidence, given that the Óttarr who seized Dublin must have had a significant powerbase in the Isles to be able both to launch the attack and to hold Dublin for several years. It is also unlikely to be coincidence that a '*thorfinus filius Oter*' is described not only as one of the *principes* of the Isles but as being 'more powerful than the rest' in 1153. Thorfinus (ON Þorfinnr) was the leader in the faction which invited Sumarliði (Somerled) of Argyll to install his son Dufgall (grandson of Óláfr Titbit through his mother) as king of the Isles in place of Óláfr's son Guðröðr.³² He must surely be a son of one of the Óttarrs already discussed, although it is not clear which. Nevertheless, there seems little doubt that there was a 'high-born' family using Óttarr as a dynastic name, with a power-base in the Isles, which was powerful across the whole of the Irish Sea zone in the mid-twelfth century, and it is likely that these were related to the earlier Óttarr jarl killed in Man. Could this in any way relate to Óttarr jarl of Thurso?

The only evidence to link Óttarr of Thurso with the western Óttarrs is circumstantial, and it is therefore impossible to prove a family connection. Nevertheless, I believe that such an interpretation is entirely

³⁰ Duffy (1992), p. 121.

³¹ *ByT (Pen)*, sub 1142 [1144]; *ByT (RBH)* sub 1142 [1144].

³² *CRMI*, sub 1143 [1153].

consistent with the limited evidence available. Clearly Óttarr of Thurso can not be readily identified with either reference to an Óttarr son of Óttarr. *Orkneyinga saga* identifies him clearly as the son of Moddan of the Dales, and there is no reason to question this identification. However, the saga tells us nothing of Moddan's own antecedents, nor does it even identify his wife. As discussed above, Moddan's name appears to be of Celtic origin, and could thus plausibly derive from a native line either in Caithness or somewhere in the Suðreyjar. There seems no strong reason to prefer one option to the other, but the name Moddan does not occur in the context of the kingdom of the Isles, and he first appears in Caithness, so there is no particular reason to suggest that his origins lie elsewhere.

However, it is perfectly possible that his un-named wife was related in some way to the western Óttarr dynasty. Given Moddan's own Celtic name, a wife from a family with a Norse identity would explain the mixture of names among their children. If Moddan's wife was the daughter of one of the western Óttarrs, Óttarr of Thurso could thus have been named after his grandfather, a common occurrence within Norse naming practice. Furthermore, Óttarr has every appearance of being a dynastic name, and there are parallels for the use of such dynastic names among the family of the Orkney jarls in the twelfth century. Haraldr the Young had the precedents of Haraldr Smooth-Talker and Haraldr Maddaðarson, and Haraldr Smooth-Talker's son Erlendr had the precedents of both the eleventh-century Erlendr, son of Þorfinn the Mighty, and the tenth-century son of Torf-Einar. Haraldr Maddaðarson named one of his sons Þorfinn, recalling both Þorfinn the Mighty and the earlier Þorfinn Skull-Splitter. Most significant of all, however, is the name Rögnvaldr Kali. Born Kali Kolsson, he was descended from the earldom line through his mother, deliberately adopting the name Rögnvaldr when he decided to press his claim to the earldom, specifically recalling Rögnvaldr Brusason as the most accomplished (*görviliga*) of the former jarls,³³ but also recalling the founder of the dynasty, Rögnvaldr of Møre. While there is nothing to suggest that Óttarr's name was an adoption, both Rögnvaldr Kali and Haraldr the Young (*ungi*) provide parallels for descendants of jarls in the female line carrying the name of former jarls and aspiring to the same status for themselves. Again, the precise family connection can only be

³³ OS, ch. 61, p. 140.

conjecture, but given that Óttarr seems to have been most prominent in the second quarter of the twelfth century, it is chronologically perfectly acceptable for him to have been a grandson of the Óttarr jarl killed in 1098 on Man. No precise date is given for Óttarr's death, nor is it recorded how or where he died, but the saga's reference to his death implies that it took place a few years before Rögnvaldr Kali's crusade, and therefore in the late 1140s. This would make him a direct contemporary of the Óttarr who seized Dublin and was killed in 1148. One could even conceivably argue that the two were actually the same person, but this would probably be stretching the evidence too far.³⁴

Descent from the Óttarr jarl of 1098 would explain Óttarr's own status of jarl, and also the saga's claim that the family as a whole were high-born, and thought a lot of themselves. Such a connection to the Suðreyjar and beyond would also provide a context for the marriage alliance with Óláfr Titbit. This marriage would have brought Óláfr not only an alliance with Hákon of Orkney but potentially also with one of the leading families of the Suðreyjar. Furthermore, if Óttarr himself was active in the west, and perhaps built his reputation there, this could explain why he was able to maintain his high status, as well as his position in Thurso without any recorded challenge, despite never playing a very active role in any of the events and political manoeuvring described in *Orkneyinga saga*. Such a relationship would also provide a stronger explanation for two other episodes which took place after Óttarr's death, one relating to the kingdom of the Suðreyjar, one to Caithness.

The episode in the Suðreyjar has already been mentioned. This is the invitation by *Thorfinus filius Oter* to Sumarliði of Argyll to install his son Dufgall (Dugald) as king of the Suðreyjar in place of Guðröðr, son of Óláfr Titbit. Dufgall's claim was through his mother Ragnhild,³⁵ daughter of Óláfr, although it is not recorded who her mother was. David Sellar has suggested that she was the daughter of Ingibjörg, daughter of Hákon of Orkney and Helga Moddandsdóttir (the sister of Óttarr of Thurso).³⁶ Sellar interprets this as in part a reaction to the

³⁴ This would require Moddan to be the son of another Óttarr (possibly the Óttarr jarl of 1098), making Óttarr of Thurso the *Mac mic Ottir* of the Annals of the Four Masters, while also requiring the reference to the same individual as *McOthyr* in the Annals of Clonmacnoise to be incorrect.

³⁵ *OS*, ch. 100, p. 274.

³⁶ Sellar (2000), p. 198.

tyranny of Guðröðr, as described in the Manx Chronicle, and suggests that Thorfinus's offer may also have been based in a misjudged hope that he might be able to exploit the situation to restore his own family's dominant position. Given Sumarliði's growing domination of the western mainland at this time,³⁷ it is at first hard to see what Thorfinus had to gain from such an offer, since Sumarliði was obviously well-placed to assume a dominant position in the Suðreyjar himself and, indeed, he rather than Dufgall seems to have been regarded as king after his defeat of Guðröðr.³⁸ However, if both Sellar's suggestion of Ragnhild's parentage and my suggested association of Óttarr of Thurso with the western Óttarrs are correct, everything falls into place. Just how closely related Óttarr of Thurso and *Thorfinus filius Oter* were, we can not tell. The chronology is consistent with Thorfinus being a son of the Óttarr active in Dublin in the 1140s, or with being a son of the Óttarr son of the other Óttarr active in Wales in 1144, or even with being a son of Óttarr of Thurso himself, although *Orkneyinga saga* does not mention any sons, and Óttarr does not seem to have been succeeded by a son at Thurso (although this was precisely the point at which Thorfinus was active in the Isles, so he could have been too pre-occupied there to press any claims in Caithness). However, even if the relationship was a little more remote, the arguments for Óttarr of Thurso's ancestry apply by inference to his sister Helga as well, in which case her daughter Ingibjörg would be some sort of cousin of Thorfinus. If so, and if the suggested identity of Ragnhild as Ingibjörg's daughter is correct, Sumarliði's sons would also have been relatives of Thorfinus as well as descendants of the Manx royal house. In this context, it would make more obvious sense for Thorfinus to be pressing the claims of a younger relation with a direct claim to the kingship, perhaps hoping that he, rather than (or as well as) Sumarliði would be acting as regent for the young Dufgall.

This connection also provides added context for a Hebridean incursion into Caithness later in the century. According to *Orkneyinga saga*, 'William, king of Scots, learned that [...] jarl Haraldr Maddaðarson, had taken control of the whole of Caithness, without his leave. The king of the Scots was greatly annoyed by this, and sent messengers to the Suðreyjar, to Rögnvaldr Guðrøðarson, king of the Suðreyjar. The

³⁷ McDonald (1997), pp. 44–54; Sellar (2000), pp. 191–3.

³⁸ McDonald (1997), p. 57.

mother of Guðröðr was Ingibjörg, daughter of jarl Hákon Pálsson. King Rögnvaldr was at that time the greatest warrior in the western lands [...] When this message reached Rögnvaldr, he gathered a host from all of the kingdom of the Suðreyjar and from Kintyre. He also had a great force from Ireland. Then he travelled north to Caithness and subdued the whole territory, and stayed there for a while.³⁹ Barbara Crawford has interpreted this implicit invitation to Rögnvaldr as a deliberate ploy on the part of William the Lion as part of an ongoing policy of challenging the independence of Haraldr Maddaðarson and weakening his hold over Caithness by granting lands in the earldom, or even the earldom title, to Haraldr's rivals.⁴⁰ This interpretation is almost certainly correct, but David Sellar has questioned whether the saga has correctly identified the King Rögnvaldr involved as Rögnvaldr Guðrøðsson of Man. Sellar notes that Roger of Howden also records this incident, but attributes this to Rögnvaldr son of Sumarliði, stating that Rögnvaldr bought Caithness [or rather, implicitly, the title and revenues of earl] from the king.⁴¹ Sellar suggests that the *Orkneyinga saga* version has confused the two Rögnvaldrs, since the Manx Chronicle states that Rögnvaldr Guðrøðsson was descended from Óláfr not from his relationship with Ingibjörg, but from his marriage to Affrica, daughter of Fergus of Galloway. The fact that this Rögnvaldr's sister was also called Affrica would tend to support this, as would reference to Rögnvaldr as 'descendant of Fergus' in a Gaelic praise poem. Furthermore, the Manx Chronicle states that Óláfr had numerous concubines by whom he had various children including the daughter who married Sumarliði of Argyll. Sellar argues that this un-named concubine was Ingibjörg, and that Rögnvaldr son of Sumarliði, rather than Rögnvaldr son of Guðröðr, was therefore Ingibjörg's grandson. Certainly some confusion seems to have occurred in both accounts of 'Rögnvaldr' becoming involved in Caithness. Rögnvaldr Guðrøðsson of Man is said in *Orkneyinga saga* to have gathered troops in Kintyre, which is much more likely to be true of his cousin, who on occasion

³⁹ OS, ch. 110, p. 293. *Vilhjálmr Skotakonungr spurði, ... at Haraldr jarl Maddaðarson hafði unnr sik lagt allt Katanes ok hann ekki sik eptir spurt. Varð Skotakonungr þessu reiðr mjök ok sendi menn í Suðreyjar til Rognvalds Suðreyjakonungs Guðrøðarsonar. Móðir Guðrøðar var Ingibörg, dóttir Hákonar jarls Pálssonar. Rognvaldr konungr var þá mestr hermaðr í Vestrlandum ... Þegar er Rognvaldi komu þessi orð, dró hann her saman um allt Suðreyjaríki ok af Sátiríe; hann hafði ok mikit lið af Írlandi. Helt hann þá norðr til Katanes ok tók undir sik allt landit ok dvalðisk þar um hríð.*

⁴⁰ Crawford 1976–7, p. XX.

⁴¹ SAEC, p. 317; Sellar (2000) pp. 196–8.

used the title *Dominus de Ergile et Kynntyre*, while Roger of Howden places Rögnvaldr son of Sumarliði in Man, which *was* controlled by Rögnvaldr Guðrøðsson.⁴² It would seem that the existence at the same time of two Rögnvaldrs, both of whom were grandsons of Óláfr Titbit, and both of whom at times used the title *rex insularum*, was as confusing for the chroniclers of the thirteenth century as for the historians of the twenty-first. The evidence simply does not permit a definitive attribution of this event to one cousin over the other although, as discussed above, the identification of Ingibjörg as the grandmother of Rögnvaldr son of Sumarliði does help make sense of why Þorfinn son of Óttarr should have supported Rögnvaldr's brother Dufgall as claimant to the kingdom of the Isles.

With regard to Hebridean involvement in Caithness, however, it really does not matter which Rögnvaldr was involved, so long as he was the grandson of Ingibjörg. This gave him a claim to the earldom of Orkney, but it also gave him a claim to the estates formerly held by Óttarr of Thurso. As mentioned above, there is no reference to Óttarr leaving a direct heir in Caithness, and the only mention of his death carries the additional information that Erlendr, son of Haraldr Smooth-Talker, and Óttarr's great-nephew, spent most of his time in Thurso, implying that he had inherited the estate.⁴³ He was killed shortly afterwards, and it would appear that Haraldr Maddaðarson, another great-nephew of Óttarr as well as being earl of Orkney, took the estate for himself, and the castle that he built at Thurso became central to earldom power in Caithness, one of a group of fortifications in Caithness which were central to Haraldr's conflicts with Scottish kings and bishops.⁴⁴ The death of Haraldr the Young, son of another of Óttarr's great-nephews as well as the grandson of jarl Rögnvaldr Kali, meant two things. Firstly, it meant the extinction of the last (recorded) potential claimant to the earldom of Orkney (apart from Haraldr Maddaðarson and his children) who was normally based within the earldom, and who could claim descent from a previous jarl who had ruled in the last century. While the claim of Rögnvaldr, son of Ragnhild, daughter of Ingibjörg, daughter of jarl Hákon Pálsson was fairly distant, it was nevertheless a claim, and one which was again strengthened by possession of a dynastic

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 193–5.

⁴³ *OS*, ch. 92 p. 241.

⁴⁴ Crawford (1976–7) p. XX; Crawford (1993) p. XX.

name, now strengthened by positive associations with Rögnvaldr Kali as well as Rögnvaldr Brusason. For William the Lion, the claim was certainly good enough to attempt to use Rögnvaldr as a tool to weaken the power of Haraldr Maddaðarson in Caithness. Rögnvaldr's additional claim through Ingibjörg to the Caithness estates of the family of Moddan of the Dales, coupled with William's support, placed him in a potentially much stronger position to challenge Haraldr in Caithness than in Orkney itself. However, Rögnvaldr seems to have abandoned Caithness fairly quickly, leaving Haraldr once more in undisputed control of both the earldom and the lands of Óttarr of Thurso.

More tangentially, the saga records repeated raiding in the Suðreyjar, and even into Dublin, by Sveinn Ásleifarson. As mentioned above, Sveinn was the son of Óláfr Hrolfsson, who had been murdered by Frakökk's grandson Ölvir Brawl, last recorded in the saga as fleeing to the Suðreyjar (perhaps to his kinsmen). It is therefore not impossible that some of Svein's activities in the west may have been related to the feud between the two families, although he also seems to have had landed interests in the west through his marriage to a Manx widow.⁴⁵ The presence of Haraldr Maddaðarson's son Hákon on two of these raids⁴⁶ could also reflect the dynastic rivalry between the two branches of the earldom line. However, given Sveinn's generally piratical behaviour throughout his appearance in the saga, there need not be any particular significance in this raiding.

Conclusion

None of the above proves a definite connection between Óttarr of Thurso and the Óttarr family in the west. This association can only be conjectural, based on the limited evidence available although, as far as I can see, the suggestion is consistent with all of the evidence, and provides the most plausible interpretation to date of those different strands of evidence. It would provide an explanation both for Óttarr's title and for his family's high opinion of themselves, and it also provides a possible reason for Þorfinn *filius Oter* to support the claims of Dugald (Dufgall) son of Sumarliði. What does seem clear, whether this family

⁴⁵ OS, ch. 78–9, pp. 179–80.

⁴⁶ OS; ch. 106–7, pp. 284–6; Topping (1983), p. 101.

link did exist, or whether the only family link with the Suðreyjar came through Ingibjörg's relationship with Óláfr, is that there was considerable contact throughout this period between Orkney and Caithness on the one hand and the Suðreyjar on the other.

Political and dynastic links between Dublin and the Suðreyjar are well documented in the eleventh and twelfth century, and virtually all studies of the earldom of Orkney have recognised the importance of looking at Orkney and Caithness together. There is also a growing awareness of a network of marriage alliances in the twelfth century between local dynasties on the Scottish mainland, such as those of Fergus of Galloway, Sumarliði of Argyll and the MacHeth family, and the rulers of both Orkney and the kingdom of the Isles.⁴⁷ The interpretation of Óttarr's lineage presented here would fit into a similar pattern, but slightly lower down the social structure. A parallel here would perhaps be the marriage of Sveinn Ásleifarson to a widow on the Isle of Man,⁴⁸ giving him an interest in the kingdom of the Isles as well as in Orkney and Caithness. One of Barbara Crawford's great achievements has been the promotion of the concept of Scandinavian Scotland as a whole, rather than an overly narrow focus on the constituent elements of that whole. For the Viking Age, that approach has been generally accepted, and the continued relationship thereafter of both the Northern Isles and the Suðreyjar with Norway has also been considered by a number of authors, as has the relationship with Scotland. The relationship between the two main political entities of Scandinavian Scotland in the twelfth century has been less frequently discussed. This paper has raised only possibilities, rather than definite answers, but I hope that it does show the value of continuing to look at Scandinavian Scotland as a whole beyond the Viking Age, not just in terms of how rulers and chieftains of Scandinavian origin interacted with the larger kingdoms of Norway and Scotland, but also how the politics of one part of Scandinavian Scotland could impact on another.

⁴⁷ Topping (1983) 105–6, 112–15; McDonald (1997); McDonald (2000), pp. 44–7.

⁴⁸ *OS*, ch. 78–9, pp. 179–80.

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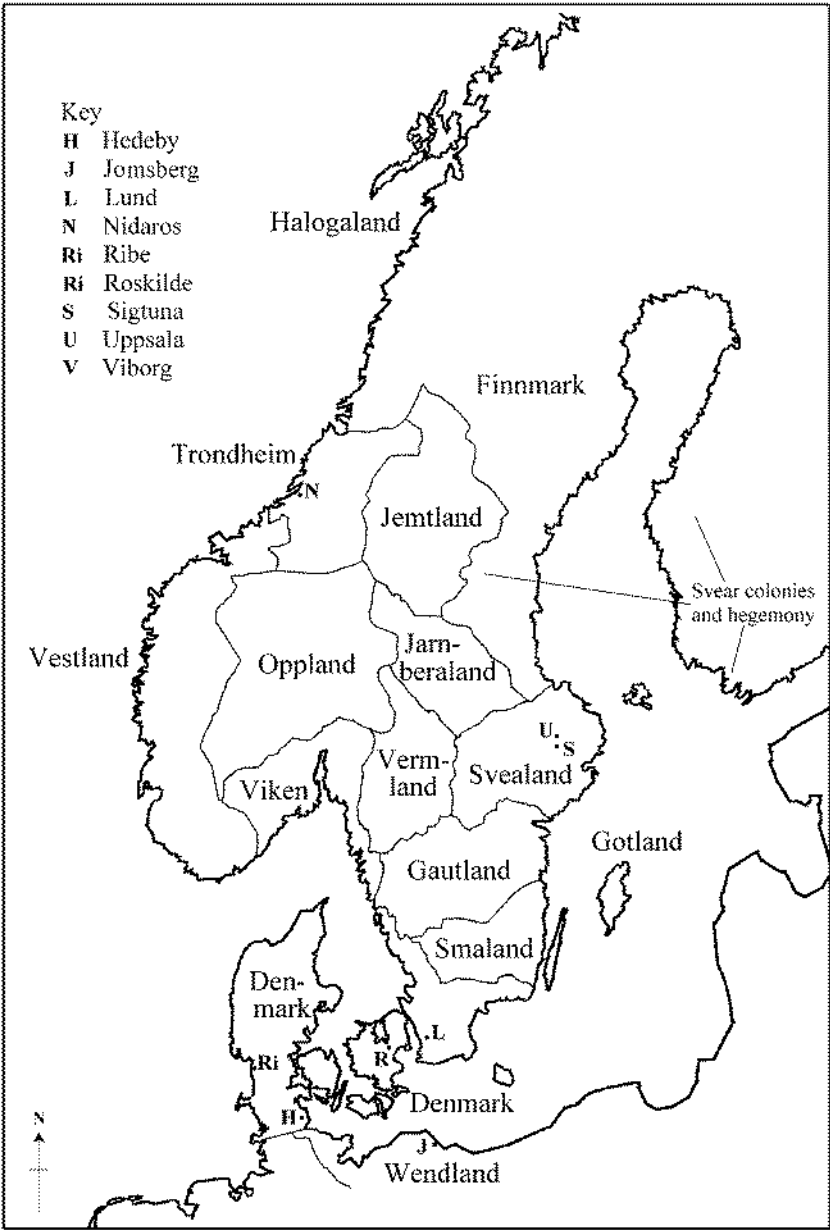
THE WOOD BEYOND THE WORLD: JÄMTLAND AND THE NORWEGIAN KINGS

Alex Woolf

For students of the Viking Age in Scotland the dominant paradigm has been that of the Norwegian expansion into the North Atlantic. The twin phenomena of colonisation ‘west over sea’ by Norwegian farmers and the subsequent efforts by the Norwegian crown to exert authority over these colonies, culminating in the annexation of Iceland in 1262 and the surrender of claims to hegemony over the Western Isles to the Scottish crown in 1266, have provided the narratives within which we have sought to contextualise our understanding of the Scottish experience. This western colonisation, however, was not the only Norwegian expansion in the early and central middle ages. Both archaeological and narrative sources bear witness to an expansion east, over Kjölen, into Jämtland and the adjacent provinces of what is now the Swedish Norrland (Illus. 15).

In his famous compendium of kings’ sagas, *Heimskringla*, Snorri Sturluson, writing in the mid-thirteenth century, tells of the settlement of Jämtland:

Eysteinn *Upplendingakonungr*, whom some call the Powerful, and some the Evil, harried in Trondheim and laid under himself Eynafylki and Sparbyggvafylki... King Eysteinn committed many other atrocities against the Trønder. On account of this harrying and hostility many chieftains fled and many folk abandoned their patrimony. Ketill *janti*, the son of Earl Önundr from Sparabú, travelled east over the Keel accompanied by a great many people, and they took their livestock with them. They cleared the forests and settled there many great districts. That [land] was afterwards called Jämtland. Ketill’s paternal grandson was called Thórir *helsingr*. He went east over the forest from Jämtland, on account of a killing, so that it came to pass that he settled there and many men followed him thither. And that [land] is called Hälsingland, going all the way to the sea. The Swedes settled the east of Hälsingland, by the coast. But when Haraldr Finehair extended his power [over Norway], then many men fled the land before him, Trønder and Namdaler alike, and they made their settlements in Jämtland and some went all the way to Hälsingland. (*Hálgóð* XII, my translation)



Illus. 15 Map of Scandinavia showing (Jemtland/Jämtland) (not to scale).

Jämtland covers a vast area, approximately 37,500 sq. km (Benedictow 2003, 240), but mostly comprises coniferous forest and heathland and at its height, shortly before the Black Death, the medieval population seems to have occupied only 1,130 farms (Salvesen 1979, 158). This is about a quarter of the number of farms found in Iceland (which has nearly three times the surface area of Jämtland) in this period. Estimates as to the population of medieval Scandinavian farms fluctuate wildly, but if each farm supported only a nuclear family then we might imagine a total population of about six thousand and doubling that would probably give us an upper limit for a realistic population estimate. Place-name evidence on the island of Frösön, in the centre of the province, suggests that the number of farms may have doubled between primary settlement (in the Viking Age or shortly before) and the demographic peak c. 1300 (Salvesen 1979, 144). It is not clear to what extent one might extrapolate such expansion across the region but it is suggestive.

Dating the Scandinavian settlement is less easy. Snorri's account of Ketill *jamtí*'s flight before Eysteinn the Evil is a retrospective aside, and not located chronologically, but elsewhere Snorri places Eysteinn six generations above Haraldr Finehair (*Yng* XLIV). By dead reckoning this should put his *floruit* between 120 and 180 years before that of Haraldr (who is reckoned to have died c.935), and thus in the mid- to late-eighth century, but it is unlikely that this is a reliable methodology and the details of the account are almost certainly legendary. Suffice to say that medieval Norwegians and Icelanders believed that the primary settlement of Jämtland pre-dated the Viking Age or, at the latest, belonged to its earliest phase. The claim that the settlers originated in Sparbyggvafylki seems credible. This remains the only Norwegian district which extends, territorially, across Kjölen, comprising as it does the headwaters of a number of rivers which ultimately drain into the Gulf of Bothnia. This peculiarity can be explained by a relatively low stretch of Kjölen at this point, dropping to below 500 metres above sea-level between Sandsjöen (on the Norwegian side of the watershed) and Kvesjöen (on the Bothnian side). The bulk of Sparbyggvafylki, however, lay along the north-eastern shores of Trondheimsfjord, and contained the important chieftaincy sites of Egg, Steinker and Mærin, as well as Sparabú itself.

The low stretch of Kjölen allows moderating Atlantic weather systems to exert some influence on Jämtland and these combined with the

regionally atypical lime-rich Cambro-Silurian bed rock covering much of the province produce an unusually mild and fertile environment when compared with other provinces of Norrland (Anderson 1985, 39). Indeed it is just possible that the name Jämtland (ON *Jamtaland*) originally meant 'Mild Land' or, more likely, 'Flat Land', in contrast to the mountainous regions which surround the basin of Storsjön (for a variety of alternative hypotheses see Ståhl 1970, 138 ff. and Flemström 1983, 11–12). At the centre of the province lies Storsjön, 'the Great Lake', and the vast majority of early Scandinavian settlement lay around the shores of this lake. By the end of the Viking Age a provincial assembly, or *Alþing*, known as the *Jamtamot* or 'Jämt Moot', had been established on the largest island in Storsjön, Frösön ('The Island of Freyr'). It was here, not far from the thing site, that Sweden's most northerly rune stone was erected. Its inscription reads:

Austmaðr, Guðfast's son, had this stone raised and this bridge built and he had the whole of Jämtland Christianized. Ásbjorn made the bridge. Tryn and Sten carved these runes. (Sawyer 2000, 133)

Opinion differs as to whether Guðfast was a local chieftain, a lawman at the *Alþing* or an agent of some external power, such as the Swedish or Norwegian king (see the various contributions in Brink 1996).

Archaeology would seem to indicate that Scandinavian penetration into the region began in the fifth or sixth centuries although it must be emphasised that this interpretation is based entirely upon funerary remains and may be open to other readings (Anderson 1985, 39; Zachrisson 1976). Unlike Iceland, the Faroes or even Greenland, this was not an uninhabited landscape and Saami peoples had been exploiting the forests of Norrland for centuries. These people were for the most part hunter-gatherers but may have engaged in some pastoralism and agriculture (there are dangers of methodological circularity here since indications of agricultural practice in the archaeological record have frequently been taken as markers of Scandinavian ethnicity (Zachrisson, 1985)). By the eleventh century, at the latest, the territories to the north-east of Jämtland, around the head of the Gulf of Bothnia, were occupied by the powerful Kainulaiset nation, whom Adam of Bremen famously mistook for Amazons (in ON the Kainulaiset were known as *Kvenir* easily confused with the ON word for 'women'), and who were powerful enough to defeat a Swedish army and kill Önundr son of King Emundr (Adam of Bremen, IV. 19). By analogy with more recent colonial experiences we might imagine that the rise of

the Kainulaiset as a formidable and aggressive force may have been a response to Scandinavian encroachment. What the nature of early contact between Jämts and their Finnic neighbours may have been is open to speculation.

The earliest archaeological evidence that has been interpreted as indicative of Scandinavian settlement comprises burial mounds containing artefacts deriving from both Trøndelag and the Bothnian coast. In the fifth century a fort was built at Mjälleborg, also known as Öneberget, on Frösön. It was burnt down almost immediately and then rebuilt. It was constructed with earth embankments surmounted by a three-metre high dry-stone wall which, the excavators speculate, was surmounted by a wooden palisade. This fort is the only one of its kind in Jämtland but belongs to a class of hill-fort of which seventeen examples are known from the Bothnian coast, to the east, and somewhere in the region of thirty from Trøndelag, to the west. About a dozen of the Trønder examples are located in Sparbyggvafylki. What is not clear is how long Mjälleborg was occupied (Hemmendorff 1985, 1992). The possible link with Sparbyggvafylki recalls the story of Ketill *jamti* but the chronology places that link far earlier than the saga would seem to. What is in broad agreement with *Heimskringla*'s account is the intensification of Norwegian settlement in the ninth and tenth centuries. Some burials from this period around Storsjön were particularly wealthy including sleighs (complete with their horses), scales, silver fittings, weapons and crampons (Kjellmark 1905, Gräslund 1996, 28–33).

While Scandinavian settlement was focused, as elsewhere, on mixed farms it is unlikely that any of these farms would have been sufficiently rich to do more than satisfy the basic subsistence needs of its occupants and it is generally believed that the principal motivation for the colonisation of Jämtland was the desire to exploit, or control the exploitation of, the province's non-agrarian resources. These included fur-bearing animals, from beavers to bears, elk (*Alces alces*) (for leather and meat), and bog iron. The settlement of Jämtland also went hand in hand with the opening up of the trade route which linked the Mälars region of central Sweden, with its successive *emporía* at Birka and Sigtuna, with Hálogaland, the Norwegian colonial territory north of Namdal. The fort at Frösön may have been deliberately built to secure control for this trade and it is likely that Hálogaland, Jämtland and Birka developed together as part of a systematic exploitation of the boreal zone. The great lakes and rivers of Jämtland and the surrounding provinces doubtless provided the highways along which sleighs, in winter, or boats,

in summer, could transport furs and hides southwards and silver and exotic eastern goods northwards.

In many ways then Jämtland was not so different from Norway's Atlantic colonies. The cluster of farms around the shores of Storsjön that made up the bulk of the community were much like those which lay around the rims of the Atlantic islands. The trackless forest which surrounded the settled country of central Jämtland was both rich and dangerous like the ocean. Relations with the Norwegian kings were also similar to those of the islanders. Snorri follows his description of the establishment of Jämtland thus:

The Helsingjar had their trading journeys to the Swedish nation and were thus entirely their subjects, but the Jämts were somewhat in between and none was concerned with them until Hákon established peace and trade relations with Jämtland and made friends with their chieftains. Then they came from the East to him and entered into agreement with him to be his subjects and to pay tribute and become his thegns because they perceived his goodness.' (*Hákgóð* XII).

This we can probably take with a pinch of salt. The earlier collection of kings' sagas *Fagrskinna*, Snorri's main source for *Heimskringla*, makes no mention of this episode, nor is it supported by any of the Skaldic verse. *Fagrskinna*, rather, attributes the establishment of Norwegian supremacy in Jämtland to King Eysteinn Magnusson (c. 1103–23) (§92). There the subjugation of Jämtland is simply stated as an accomplishment of Eysteinn but a more detailed account of his reign is found in the slightly earlier *Morkinskinna* (which does not cover the reign of Hákon the Good in the mid-tenth century):

He [Eysteinn] expanded the kingdom by communicating with the wise men of Jämtland and gaining their warm friendship. He honoured them with gifts and moved them to thoughts of friendship towards him. Then he circulated the idea of how easy it was for them to get what they needed here in Norway, and how difficult it was to look to the east. They understood that the king spoke in their interest, and each had frequent discussions with the other. They then returned east and obtained the agreement of the people in this matter, and were given sworn oaths. They went back to Norway and placed Jämtland under King Eysteinn's rule with wisdom and affection. That arrangement has since remained firm. Thus king Eysteinn was able to win Jämtland with prudent counsel rather than with hostility and aggression, like some of his ancestors. In this way he made peace with the Jämts, and in the course of their negotiations all the district chieftains went to meet with king Eysteinn and transferred Jämtland, with its revenues, to him and became his thegns. In return he

promised them his support in the event of hostilities with the king of the Swedes, with the understanding that he was under the same obligation to aid them as the Norwegians or his other thegns. The revenues from that land still belong to the king of Norway. (*Morkinskinna* §64).

Snorri almost certainly lifted this account as the basis for his own narrative concerning Hákon the Good (c. 935–60) in order to project the Norwegian *imperium* back into the past. This reflects the agenda of Snorri and many of his contemporaries who wished to legitimise the claims for a Norwegian empire (modern Norwegian *Norgesveldet*) extending over all those places colonised from Norway in the Viking Age. This period of colonisation was usually ascribed to the reign of Haraldr Finehair.

The lengthy reign given by both saga writers and the Norwegian synoptic historians to Haraldr Finehair, the apical figure for the Norwegian dynasty, usually in the region of seventy years, seems to have been generated by the synchronising of Haraldr's reign with the settlement of Iceland, which was believed to have begun in the reign of Pope Adrian II (867–72). This synchronism first appears in *Landnámabók* (Jakob Benediktsson 1986, 32–3), the first recension of which is believed to have been composed in the second quarter of the twelfth century, in which a number of rulers are listed as having ruled at the time of the Icelandic settlement; Adrian II (867–72) and John VIII (872–82), Louis the German (843–76), Leo VI (886–912) and his brother Alexander (912–13) of Byzantium, two Swedish kings Eiríkr Eymundarsonr and his son Björn (for whom no dates are available),¹ Gormr the Old of Denmark (died c.958?), Alfred the Great (871–99) and his son Edward (899–924), and Cerball of Dublin, usually identified with Cerball mac Dúnlainge of Osraige (847–88) but more likely Cerball mac Muirecáin of Leinster (885–909), who actually drove the Norse from Dublin in 902 (*AU* 902.2). Clearly not all of these rulers were contemporaries. No Frankish or German king is given after Louis, for example, nor any Pope after John, although Alexander, Edward and Gormr all began their reigns after the death of these rulers. This synchronism therefore does not allow us to identify a moment of *landnám* but simply a process

¹ Although according to *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* these kings were the grandfather and father, respectively, of Eiríkr the Victorious whose son Ólafr ruled c. 995–1022 (Guðni Jónsson 1976, 69). It should be noted, however, that here Eiríkr's father is given as Ónundr.

which was believed to have occurred somewhere in the years between 843 and 958. By extraordinarily good chance the association of the first Icelandic settlement with the death of St Edmund of East Anglia (c. 869–70) by Ári in his *Íslendingabók* (Jakob Benediktsson 1986, 4) seems to have been confirmed by the identification of the so-called *Landnáms* tephra, a layer of volcanic ash which underlies almost all the evidence for Norse settlement in Iceland save the alleged founding farm at Reykjavík (Magnús Stefansson 2003, 209–10), which can be dated to 870 (plus or minus two years). Haraldr's reign need not, therefore, have coincided with the beginning of the Icelandic settlement but merely with that of some of the rulers mentioned in the synchronism. An end date for his reign could be reached by recourse to the regnal years accorded to subsequent kings, and this gives a date in the 930s. Since Haraldr was thought to have been the first Norwegian king it was not possible to name his predecessor (in the way that Edward's father Alfred had been named), and thus one could infer that he had reigned throughout the *Landnámsöld*.

The tradition that the Icelanders descended from refugees from Harald's *riksamling* ('unification of the kingdom') allowed them the paradoxical conceit that they were both 'Independent People' and 'King's Men', a paradox that is explored time and again in both Icelandic literature and in the life of Snorri Sturluson himself. That such a conceit was shared by the Jämts, or, more likely, thrust upon them by the Icelanders, was hinted at in Snorri's account of the settlement of Jämtland, which made Ketill *jamtí* himself a refugee from one of Haraldr's ancestors and which claimed that 'when Haraldr Finehair extended his power [over Norway], then many men fled the land before him, Trønder and Namdaler alike, and they made their settlements in Jämtland' (see above). *Landnámabók* is more explicit: 'Véþormr, son of Vémundr the Old, was a powerful chieftain; he fled before King Haraldr east into Jämtland and there cleared forest for settlements' (Jakob Benediktsson 1986, 387).

These various accounts have been challenged from time to time by the assertion that hegemony had originally lain with the kings of the Svear, the true Swedes, of the Mälar region. The evidence for this point of view is principally connected with the ecclesiastical situation of Jämtland and to two pieces of evidence in particular. These are the character of the rune stone from Frösön, which stylistically derives from the Mälar region rather than Norway, and the fact that Jämtland

emerged as a part of the diocese of Uppsala rather than Nidaros, despite the continuing claims and ever strengthening hold of the Norwegian kings on the region.

The rune stone certainly belongs to a distinct group, usually assigned to the mid-eleventh century, which is centred on Svealand proper. It is, however, at least in part a local product as the inscription seems to betray hints of a Jämtish dialect and at least one of the personal names, Tryn, is peculiarly Jämtish, and another, Austmaðr, may be (Williams 1996). The episcopal jurisdiction is more surprising. Both Jämtland's colonial origins and subsequent, later medieval and early modern, political affiliation might have encouraged one to expect that its diocesan affiliation would have lain with Nidaros (Trondheim), a bishop's seat since Ólafr Kyrre's time (1066–93) and an archbishopric from 1152. In fact it lay in the diocese of Uppsala, which had been founded in 1140 and elevated to archiepiscopal status as late as 1164. Uppsala's predecessor, Sigtuna, was only founded *c.* 1060, probably after the erection of the Frösön rune stone (Sandnes 1996, 112). It thus seems unlikely that the mission itself was directed from a Swedish see. The earliest confirmation we have that Jämtland lay within Uppsala's jurisdiction comes from a letter sent to the people of Jämtland and Hälsingland by Archbishop Laurentius promising anyone who helps in the construction of the Cathedral church forty days indulgence. This letter is dated October 6, 1257 (Gunnes 1989, 284). This late date should not disturb us unduly. Sweden is practically prehistoric before the thirteenth century and surviving written documents from the twelfth century are extremely rare. It seems most likely that Uppsala or Sigtuna, while not actively involved in the conversion, had somehow managed to get recognition of their rights in Jämtland prior to the elevation of Nidaros to metropolitan status in 1152 when its jurisdiction was spelled out. Possibly the leading priests in Jämtland in the run up to 1152 had simply been ordained in Svealand and were thus regarded as personally bound to the bishop of Uppsala.

Sandness has argued that the disputes about whether or when Norwegian or Swedish jurisdiction were imposed or exchanged are anachronistic (1996, 110). He argues that 'the most fruitful and reasonable perspective today must be to see Jämtland in the eleventh century as in most respects an autonomous "farmer republic", with its own law and rights, a great degree of political independence and its own ethnic identity' (*loc. cit.*, my translation). Jämtland's final incorporation into

the Norwegian kingdom belongs to the age of the *Sverre-ætta*, the new Norwegian dynasty that emerged in the decades around 1200 following the civil wars that had raged for much of the twelfth century.

The history of the *Sverre-ætta* was recorded almost contemporaneously in sagas written by men closely associated with the courts of their subjects. Unlike *Heimskringla* and the other compendia of kings' sagas, which were products of this same era and milieu, *Sverris saga* and *Hákons saga Hákonarsonar* are as close to eyewitness accounts as medieval narrative sources are likely to get, albeit with all the caveats regarding political and social interests. *Sverris saga* recounts two episodes involving its eponymous hero, both at the beginning of his bid for the kingship of Norway. In the first episode, set in 1177, (§14) he is attempting to enter Norway from Sweden and passes through Jämtland. He knows that King Magnus, his rival, has 'many *lendir*² there' although they subsequently make peace with Sverrir and sixty Jämt warriors join his band. The construction here is interesting. We are told not that Magnus ruled Jämtland, or that the Jämts supported him, but simply that he had many *lendir* there. This is a point worth noting.

The following year (§26), when Sverrir is slightly more established but still unable to get the upper hand in the struggle for Norway, he attempts to repeat his previous strategy and crossing out of Norway into Värmland he heads north, skirting the Swedish side of Kjölen. On this occasion the Jämts, perhaps disconcerted by the size of his following, allow him to billet his men among them and then make a surprise attack on him in the night. Although outnumbered Sverrir's hardened warriors defeat the Jämts. The saga continues:

In the morning the king sent for his other men [who had been billeted out], and all came. The Jämts now begged for peace, and brought hostages to the king, and were reconciled to him. He laid a heavy tribute on them. They agreed to become his subjects, and he appointed bailiffs to collect fines and other dues. The Jämts confirmed the agreement with many oaths, and when the tribute was paid, the king departed from them without more ado. (Sephton 1899, 33).

This would seem to have been the beginning of regular royal interference in Jämtish affairs and indeed *Hákons saga* (§10) states directly that King Sverrir had won Jämtland, with the sword, and laid it under

² Translated as 'barons' by Sephton (1899), but this is perhaps an uncomfortable rendering. 'King's men' or 'thegns' might be happier.

Norwegian rule (Mundt 1977, 11; Dasent 1997, 16). Elsewhere in *Hákons saga* (§216) there is mention of a man called Þórir twig-biter who was the steward over Jämtland for Duke Skúli in 1240 (Mundt 1977, 114; Dasent 1997, 207). The incorporation of the province into the kingdom may have been facilitated by royal encouragement of the development of a native nobility of a sort that had not existed before. One of the genealogical appendices to *Fagrskinna* tells us that Ingiríðr, the aunt of King Ingi Barðsson (1204–17) was married to Guþormr son of Austmaðr ‘from Jämtland’ (Finlay 2004, 300). Guþormr’s patronymic is suggestively the same name as that of the man who claimed to have converted the province on the Frösön stone. Chronology will not allow us to assume that the two ‘Austmenn’ are one, but the name is one of those thought to be peculiarly Jämtish so it would not be surprising if Ingiríð’s husband’s ancestors had not been products of the same environment as Austmaðr Guðfast’s son. King Ingi’s mother, Cecilia, King Sverrir’s sister, had been married at one time to Folkviðr, the Lawman of Värmland. Such marriages seem to have been aimed at drawing leading men in the ‘farmer republics’ into the aristocratic milieu that Scandinavian kings were attempting to create around themselves in this period. To this category of marriage we might add the slightly earlier alliance between Lopt Sæmundarsonr of Oddi, in Iceland, and Þóra the daughter of King Magnus Barelegs (Jakob Benediktsson 1986, 341). Folkviðr and Cecilia’s son, Hákon, bore the title of *jarl* (Finlay 2004, 301), Jón Loptsson became the most powerful Icelandic chieftain of his time (Jón Jóhannesen 1974, 231). In such a way ‘farmer republics’ became provinces of kingdoms.

Conclusions

There has not been a great deal in this paper which will have come as a surprise to historians of Jämtland. My excuse as an author is twofold. Firstly, I stand to be corrected, but I suspect that many of the readers of this book will not be historians of Jämtland and thus may find something new here. Understanding the growth and expansion of the Norwegian kingdom has become a subject of relatively wide interest amongst medievalists yet discussions have tended to focus upon the Atlantic provinces and not to have explored the eastern frontier. Doubtless there is more work to be done here. Värmland itself, mentioned briefly in passing above, could probably sustain similar studies

and as Swedish archaeologists uncover more about these regions so our appreciation of their importance will increase.

Secondly, for historians of Scandinavian Scotland, who follow in the footsteps of our honorand, the case of Jämtland may help to inspire new solutions to old problems. Jämtland seems finally to have been taken under the Norwegian crown by King Sverrir in the late twelfth century. Before this, however, some Jämtish chieftains seem to have been the thegns or *lendir* of some Norwegian kings. Some may also have been in similar relationships with kings of the Svear but sadly we have no compendia of kings' sagas relating their deeds, real or imagined. Patricia Boulhousa has recently (2005) reminded us of how many Icelandic chieftains and *stórbændir* had placed themselves in similar relationships to the Norwegian kings long before the 'annexation' of 1262. A similar explanation has been put forward for Cnut's curious style *rex...partis Suanorum*—'king of a part of the Swedes'—Birgit Sawyer (1994) arguing that individual Svear (and Gautar) had entered Cnut's service and recognised his lordship without giving him any direct claim to sovereignty in Svealand (or Gautland). We should also not forget that Othere, a farmer in Hálogaland, addressed Alfred, king of the Anglo-Saxons, as his lord. Was he a king's thegn?

We should be careful not to underplay the role of personal bonds beyond the frontiers in the extension of royal power, nor indeed as perhaps the only meaningful way for ambitious kings to intrude their influence into regions which did not have a history of monarchical institutions. Snorri may have been playing fast and loose with tradition when he ascribed the winning of Jämtland to Hákon the Good, and the author of *Morkinskinna*, in praising King Eysteinn for winning Jämtland without leaving his kingdom, may have been making a sly dig at the fruitless crusading of his brother Sigurðr,³ but both authors understood the principle at work as it was still ongoing in their own time. This was how Duke Skúli and Hákon Hákonarson dealt with Icelanders and Islesmen. We might also wonder if it provides an interpretative framework for investigating earlier episodes in the history of Scandinavian Scotland.

Two examples immediately present themselves. The first relates to events in the third quarter of the tenth century. Two entries in the

³ *Morkinskinna* a thirteenth-century text was composed in a more cynical age after the fall of Jerusalem and the sack of Constantinople.

Annals of the Four Masters (O'Donovan 1848–51) dealing with events of 962 (s.a. 960) and 974 (s.a. 972) recount attacks on Ireland by named Viking leaders, the 'son of Amlaíb' and 'Maccus son of Aralt' respectively, who are said, in each case, to have been accompanied by the 'lawmen of the Isles'. These lawmen are only heard of in these two entries and by 989 Maccus's brother Gofraid was accounted the title *rí Innse Gall*, 'king of the Islands of the Gaill' (AU 989.4). Might these lawmen have been the leaders of 'farmer republics' in the Scottish islands, in the process of being seduced into the service of kings from the Irish Sea World?

The second episode regards the sudden and inexplicable rise of Somerled and the Kingdom of Argyll in the mid-twelfth century. Might Argyll have been made up of a series of 'farmer republics'? Somerled, we know, was a man made by marriage. His wife was an illegitimate daughter of Ólafr Suðreyjakonungr (Broderick 1996, f.35v). Should we look to the law-speaker Folkviðr of Värmland, to Lopt Sæmundarson of Oddi or to Guþormr son of Austmaðr of Jämtland for appropriate parallels?

And finally, what of Orkney? Might the *gæðingar*, the 'men of property', with their attachment to their *óðal* rights have been the remnants of the big men of a farmer's republic?

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PART TWO

THE CHURCH AND THE CULT OF SAINTS

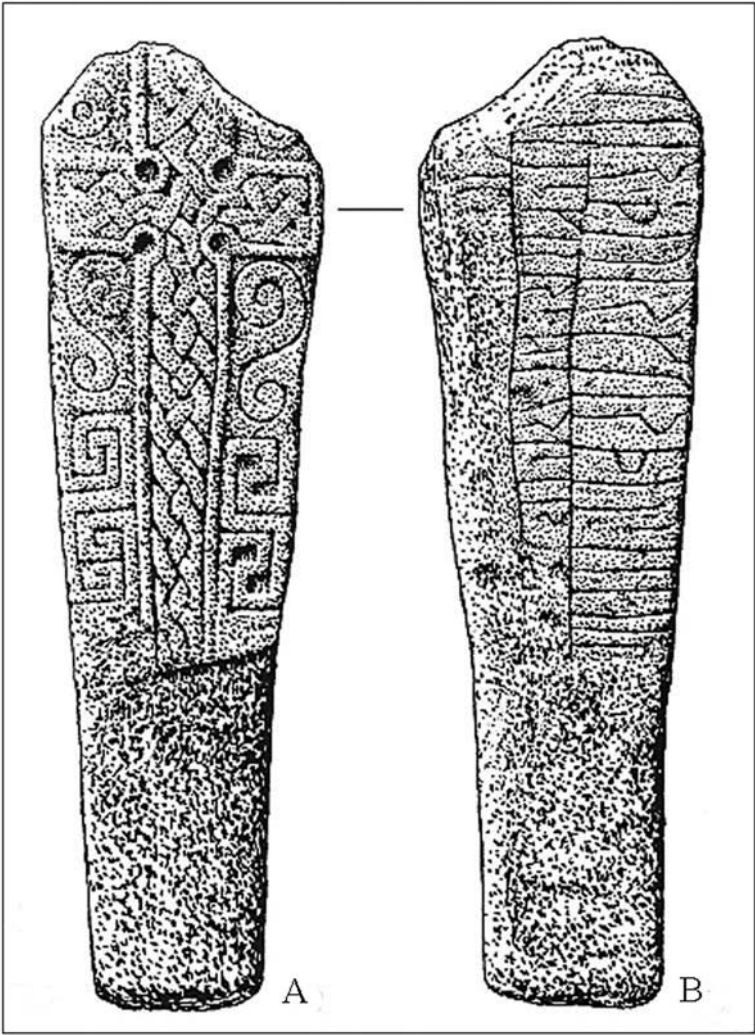
CONVERSION AND THE CHURCH IN THE
HEBRIDES IN THE VIKING AGE:
“A VERY DIFFICULT THING INDEED”¹

Lesley Abrams

In 1862, a female skeleton was discovered buried in a mound at ‘Ardvonrig’ (possibly Ardvoray) on Barra, an island at the southern end of the chain that forms the Outer Hebrides. The woman had been buried with two oval brooches, a ringed pin, a comb, and artefacts related to textile production, including an iron weaving-sword, heckles and shears, and a bronze needle-case. The grave-goods were typically Scandinavian, and their chronological contexts suggest that the woman had died and been buried in the late ninth or early tenth century (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998, 82–3). In 1865, a cross-slab was discovered on the same island in the burial-ground of the ruined church of Kilbar. Decorated with a cross and interlace that recall memorials from Govan and the Isle of Man and dated by art historians to the late tenth or early eleventh century, the slab bears a runic inscription in Old Norse which has been translated as ‘this cross is raised in memory of Thorgerðr, Steinar’s daughter’ (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998, 43–4, 83; Fisher 2001, 106–8; Barnes and Page 2006, 221–32) (Illus. 16). These two burials, epitomising on the one hand adherence to traditional ritual and on the other the profession of Christianity, could have been separated by as little as fifty years, bracketing the period during which traditional religious practices among Scandinavians overseas came to be displaced. The two women commemorated lived in interesting times, and their memorials reflect a crucial transition. The traditional ritual of the earlier burial looked back to pagan Scandinavia, linking both the dead and the living to the homelands; the runestone, on the other hand, looked outward to the wider community of Christendom.

Barra’s monuments are not unique. Numerous examples of furnished burials (male and female) have been discovered in the Inner and

¹ The quotation is from Barbara Crawford’s classic book, *Scandinavian Scotland* (1987, 163), still essential reading for students and researchers alike.



Illus. 16 Barra (Kilbar) rune stone. (Crown Copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. Drawing by I. G. Scott)

Outer Hebrides, many from nineteenth-century casual finds (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998, 113–54). Christian sculpture with Scandinavian characteristics has been identified on other Hebridean islands, such as Harris and Islay, and the western mainland as well (Fisher 2001, 9–11). If anywhere, then, Barra in particular and the Hebrides in general should allow us to analyse the change of religion experienced by the settlers of Scandinavian Scotland. The currents that brought Christianity to the immigrants would have been driven by the same forces that shaped the islands politically from the ninth century onwards, and their conversion to Christianity was bound up with the progress of Scandinavian power in the region. Religious change in the early middle ages belonged to a complex dynamic: it was stimulated by local and regional interactions, the ebb and flow of military and political power, and the development of new political and cultural identities. Understanding the way in which Scandinavian settlers in the Hebrides took up Christianity should, therefore, feed into an understanding of the larger processes of political takeover and acculturation.

It is not, of course, that simple. The Hebrides have proved to be fertile ground for speculation and disagreement about the activities and impact of Scandinavians in the Irish Sea and North Atlantic. Barra's location has recommended it as a potential base for plundering raids in the late eighth century (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998, 24); the history of the region likewise suggests that the islands played a central role in ninth- to eleventh-century developments in the extension of Scandinavian power. But the date at which Scandinavians became a permanent presence in the Hebrides is difficult to pin down. Use of the name *Innsi Gall* ('islands of the Foreigners') in the Irish annals is not attested until the late tenth century (AU *s.a.* 989). Early phases of settlement have proved elusive archaeologically (Owen 2002, 151–3; Barrett 2003b, 82–8), while the nature of the written sources has meant that hard facts are few, if any, and that hypotheses rest on shallow foundations. For the Hebrides as for the rest of Scandinavian Scotland, the evidence is mostly material or oblique: archaeology, place-names, church dedications, annals (contemporary, but written elsewhere), and later literature (seductively detailed, but retrospective and highly coloured). The canvas on which historians and archaeologists have painted their pictures of Scandinavian activity in Scotland from the late eighth century to the early eleventh is, when it comes to hard facts, almost entirely blank, making the construction of a historical narrative extremely problematic. Both the archaeology and the meretriciously

historic written sources of later literature leave open a full range of interpretations. Even the most basic aspects of the Scandinavian presence in the Hebrides are controversial (Crawford 1981; Ó Corráin 1998; Etchingham 2001; Jennings and Kruse 2005). Was there a forceful takeover and elimination of the indigenous population, or a peaceful alliance and co-operation with natives who remained in place? It would be good to know. The state of religious affairs is similarly obscure. Were existing churches respected, exploited, or threatened? How much did the ecclesiastical landscape change with the advent of Scandinavian settlement? Unfortunately, evidence to help make sense of the situation throughout Scandinavian Scotland in general and the Hebrides in particular is debilitatingly thin on the ground as well as on the page. Reconstructions—necessarily speculative—are built on fragments of evidence which could work equally well in support of a different narrative.

At the best of times conversion to Christianity is, as Barbara Crawford has said, ‘a very difficult thing indeed to monitor’ (Crawford 1987, 163). The conversion of the Scandinavian settlers in the Hebrides has therefore been particularly elusive, as the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries are hardly the best of times where evidence is concerned. The recording of written history being a Christian habit, we have no contemporary accounts of the role played by paganism in Scandinavian culture overseas. Scotland’s numerous furnished graves, which continue well into the tenth century (Graham-Campbell and Batey 1998, 113–54), have been taken to represent ongoing paganism. Place-names such as Barra’s Horough and Na Horgh (from ON *haugr*, ‘mound’; Stahl 2000, 108) may point to the contemporary importance of such monuments in the landscape. One—doubtless too simplistic—way of measuring religious conversion has been to trace changes in burial practice. The decline and disappearance of furnished burial in Scandinavian Scotland, however, ‘can tell us only that pagan beliefs were changing, . . . not how, when and why the Christian religion was adopted’ (Crawford 1987, 163). When settlement occurred, paganism had not necessarily reached the end of the road. It continued to flourish in the homelands throughout the tenth century, and in Dublin and York the old gods seem to have provided Hiberno-Scandinavian kings with political capital until the 940s. Ninth- and tenth-century farmers settling on islands in the Irish Sea or North Atlantic—especially if population replacement had been significant—could have established cult sites and worshipped much as they had at home (as they did, apparently, in Iceland, where there

was no religious competition to confuse the issue). Other landholders would have had to fit into existing Christian frameworks, however, and there must have been advantages for some in joining the Christian establishment. How change occurred would have depended on the position under the new regime of those religious centres with the means of providing continuing ecclesiastical leadership. Success or failure in the circumstances created by the Scandinavian presence doubtless conditioned the Church's ability to exert religious influence, just as on a more personal level the role of the native population in the conversion process depended on the nature of their relations with the immigrants. The degree of influence of existing institutions naturally hinged on their survival rate: conversion (and acculturation more generally) would presumably have occurred most quickly where the indigenous ecclesiastical and political infrastructure was robust. But every region was likely to have its own story. Surviving 'strands of Christian belief and tradition... were probably thicker in some places than others' (Crawford 1987, 168).

The classic model of conversion envisages a top-down process: professional Christians pitched to kings, and kings converted their families and courts and imposed Christianity on their kingdoms through a combination of ecclesiastical and secular means. This model, where mass baptism led to a new social order, is epitomised by Bede's accounts of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons in the seventh century (Colgrave and Mynors 1969) and by Adam of Bremen's and other Scandinavian conversion-narratives set in the late tenth and eleventh centuries (Tschan and Reuter 2002; Andersson 2003). The alternative, bottom-up, model is more difficult to illustrate. It envisages pagans becoming Christian more organically, modelling themselves on friends and neighbours rather than being compelled by a directing authority. This model has been applied to parts of sixth-century Francia, for example, and is increasingly used as an alternative blueprint for the conversion of Scandinavia itself (Morris 2004; Brink 2004).

How might these models apply to the Hebrides? Was there a secular power which had the potential to drive the process from the top? Was there a Christian population with sufficient social status to spread Christianity by peer pressure and example? Where were the churches that could lead missionary endeavour? Taking the last question first, we run immediately into a problem: any map of ecclesiastical power in the region in the Viking Age must be largely hypothetical. At two major early Christian centres, Kildonnan (on Eigg) and Applecross (Ross and

Cromarty), for example, the main evidence cited for the continuation of monastic life after the early ninth century consists of a few fragmentary carved stones (Fisher 2001, 2, 88, and 92–4). These are difficult to date precisely, and, even more problematically, their witness to the ecclesiastical activity occurring on site is ambiguous, not allowing us (as yet) to distinguish between local and limited Christian observance and wider missionary activity. The reappearance of Applecross in the historical record in the later middle ages recalls the case of Whithorn in Galloway. Although Whithorn's succession of bishops breaks off in the middle of the ninth century and does not resume again until 1128, a new type of Christian sculpture was raised on the site from the mid-tenth century; scholars consequently disagree on whether the episcopal church continued to operate through the period of silence (Watt 1969, 128; Craig 1991; Hill 1997, 52–4). Even the fate of the great monastery at Iona and its network of daughter-houses is uncertain (Smyth 1984, 187, 210–11; Clancy 1996; Jennings 1998). A series of Viking raids targetting the abbey was recorded in Irish annals from 795. In 825 the monk Blathmac famously lost his life 'at the hands of the heathens' while protecting the relics of Columba (AU *s.a.* 825). The survival of the monastery has nevertheless been postulated on the basis of continuing sequences of obits, (alleged) royal burials, and stone monuments. Association with Iona may have been a means of attaching prestige to the new kingship of the Scots (Cowan 1981, 7; Hudson 1994, 159; Broun 1999, 188–9). Relics of Columba were taken from Iona to Ireland in 831 and 878 and to Dunkeld in 849, however, and the ecclesiastical record is very quiet (and possibly corrupt) until activity picks up in the later tenth century. Even if a community of churchmen stayed in place after the early raids and acted as a force for Christian continuity along the western seaboard in the ninth and tenth centuries, as has been argued (Smyth 1984, 172), increasing Viking sea-power doubtless compromised the communication network of the monastery and helped to displace it from the political and ecclesiastical centre. As Scandinavian domination of the western seaboard shifted indigenous power elsewhere, Iona became more marginal and its position 'increasingly difficult' (Herbert 1988, 72). However, by the time of the burial there in 980 of Olaf Cuaran (Sihtricsson), it appears that Scandinavian Christians had made the site their own.

How this Scandinavian presence in Iona came about is obscure (Woolf 2002, 42). Olaf Cuaran, king of Dublin and one-time king of York, had received baptism in 943 from the English ruler, Edmund, in

the context of the politics of northern Britain (ASC *s.a.* 943). Although this conversion bore no noticeable fruit in England, once back in Ireland and in power in Dublin (especially from the 950s), Olaf may have been moved to demonstrate his Christianity in the conventional way: Edel Bhreathnach has argued that he patronised a number of monasteries in the kingdoms of Brega and Leinster and that his Scandinavian regime was the inspiration behind several Columban dedications there in the late tenth century (Bhreathnach 1999). Columba is a somewhat unlikely saint to become attached to in an English context, and Olaf's choice of Iona for his burial leaves open the possibility that he had established a relationship with Columba's monastery at some stage after his departure from Northumbria. Iona could perhaps have negotiated an arrangement along the lines of one dimly reflected (and distorted) in the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* between a Viking army of the late ninth century and the community of St Cuthbert in Northumbria, a friendly accommodation which probably helped to ensure that church's survival (Johnson South 2002; Aird 1998). If early Scottish kings had not co-opted Iona to give prestige to their kingship, the community could have been effectively dormant until revived to serve that purpose by the king of Dublin. Iona's sacking by Danes (*Danaraibh*) at Christmas 986 and the murder of the abbot and fifteen others (AU *s.a.* 986) show that association with Olaf's dynasty could have been a risky strategy, drawing the fire of competing Scandinavian interests.

Those who believe that an active monastic community at Iona 'must have survived' in the ninth and tenth centuries assume that the monastery drew on its ancient network of churches to evangelise the Scandinavians in the islands along the western seaboard (Jennings 1998, 48, 51). Given the state of the evidence, however, it is extremely difficult to attempt to assess the extent of continuity or disruption of inherited ecclesiastical institutions throughout the region. Place-names, in particular the corpus of *papar*-names, have been drawn into the discussion. Formed in Old Norse from a borrowed Irish word for an ecclesiastic and found across the North Atlantic, these names have been interpreted as reflecting the activities of Iona's churchmen in the Viking Age (Smyth 1984, 168–9). The Hebrides have their share of *papar*-names (MacDonald 2002, 28), including the Isle of Pabbay, which lies south of Barra, a short distance from the graves of Thorgerðr and her pagan predecessor. But any attempt to associate these place-names with Ionan monks must explain why they are only found north of Ardnamurchan, not around the monastery itself, nor elsewhere in

the southern region. In any event, use of the *papar*-names as evidence of missionary activity driven by Iona (or any other religious house) is fundamentally compromised by our ignorance of the date and context of their coining (Crawford 2005), and what they say about contact between Scandinavians and churchmen therefore remains obscure and controversial. Nor is it possible to say how and when other early place-names which reflect a Christian landscape in Norse speech, such as Kirkebost on Bernera, off Lewis (ON *kirkja*, 'church', and *bólstaðr*, 'farmstead'), were formed (Ofstedal 1954, 382; Grant 2004).

Another way of assessing Iona's survival and tracing its potential evangelical influence is through church dedications, which may show continuity of cult—although, as Barbara Crawford has warned us, dedications are 'very uncertain ground on which to draw firm conclusions' (Crawford 1987, 167). While she accepted the potentially pre-Viking origins of dedications to St Triduana and St Boniface on Papa Westray (Orkney) and pointed out that many dedications in the Hebrides 'stem from the missionary period of the Church', she nevertheless concluded that the Hebridean dedications were most likely to have had their origins in 'an era of post-conversion church-building by the Norse' (Crawford 1987, 167; Cant 1984, 175). In the absence of early dated appearances in written form it is very difficult to tell when any dedications were established, and the overwhelmingly Irish character of dedications in the Hebrides makes the identification of chronological context—before, during, or after the Viking period—even more problematic (Fellows-Jensen 1984, 151–2). Kilbar, where Thorgerðr's runestone was found, is a useful example: the place-name, as recorded in the sixteenth century, shows typical Celtic, not Germanic, word order and combines Gaelic *cill*, 'church', with the Irish personal name (Fin)barr (Stahl 1999, 214). The island-name Barra (Barr + ON *ey*, 'island') may similarly mark a connection with a saint of that name (Jennings 1998, 49–51), though ON *berr* or *barr*, 'bare' or 'rough', or Celtic **barr*, 'top' or 'peak', have been proposed as alternatives (Stahl 1999, 139; Coates 1990, 53–4).² Multiple early Irish Finbarrs (from Cork, Merville, and Clonard) complicate the question of where the Hebridean cult originated, though there is also a potential association with Iona. A poem (perhaps as early as

² I am most grateful to Doreen Waugh and Simon Taylor for passing on information from Anke-Beata Stahl's unpublished PhD thesis (Stahl 1999). I should also like to thank Paul Cullen, Fiona Edmonds, Gillian Fellows-Jensen, Judith Jesch, David Parsons, Simon Taylor, and Alex Woolf for further assistance with names and place-names.

the tenth century) describes a Saint *Bairre* as Iona's jewel (Gwynn 1904, 207–10; Ó Riain 1977, 70). The appearance of *Barreyjar*, 'the Barra Isles', in fifteenth-century manuscripts of *Grettis saga* shows that the place-name was current in Icelandic circles in the middle ages, while the possibly contemporary names of two tenth-century individuals—Alfdis hin barreyska ('from Barra') and the poet Orm Barreyjarskáld ('Barra Isles poet')—are suggestive evidence of earlier currency (Jónsson 1936, 3 and 7; Faulkes 1987, 89, 91, and 249). Orm Barreyjarskáld was the subject of a saga (now lost) told at a wedding in Iceland in 1119 (Foote 1953–7, 226). Theoretically, while the place-names Kilbar and Barra could have been adopted by Scandinavian settlers of the island with reference to a Finbarr cult there, Kilbar could alternatively have been coined as Gaelic influence—and Columban cults—increased after the Viking Age, and an existing topographical island-name reinterpreted to associate it with the saint. The connection of St Tarannán or Torannán, the dedicatee of a later chapel at Paible (a *papar*-name) on Taransay, an island off the coast of Harris, raises the same issue of chronology, although it may be helpful that Ian Fisher has described the two simple crosses found on the island as 'probably pre-Norse' (Fisher 2001, 11 and 113). The earliest recorded form of the place-name seems to be eighteenth-century.³ Kilbar's burial-ground likewise contains three simple crosses (Fisher 2001, 107), though their date is uncertain. Of all the Barra crosses, only that at Pabbay (Fisher 2001, 108) demonstrates clear-cut links with pre-Viking Pictland in its design.

Missionised Scandinavians presumably adopted the saints of the Church of their conversion. The only surviving dedications in the Hebrides that show devotion to specifically Scandinavian cults are to Olaf and Clement (the former at Gress and Teampall Amlaigh on Lewis and Kilauley on South Uist, the latter at Rodil on Harris) (Mackinlay 1914, 295–6; Crawford 1987, 167).⁴ Both of these are potentially quite late in origin.⁵ The Gaelic configuration of Teampall Amlaigh and Kilauley is of particular interest. The dedications to Olaf and Clement

³ Thanks are also due to Doreen Waugh and Simon Taylor for information from Morag Redford's unpublished M.Lit. thesis (Redford 1998).

⁴ I should like to thank Alex Woolf for drawing my attention to Teampall Amlaigh, which does not appear in Mackinlay's discussion.

⁵ Olaf died in 1030; Barbara Crawford has identified the cult of Clement, a first-century pope, with Scandinavian patronage and has linked Rodil's dedication with Cnut's appointee, Earl Hákon, who also died in 1030 (Crawford 1999).

suggested to Barbara Crawford a 'stronger Scandinavian imprint in the Outer Hebrides than in the Inner' (Crawford 1987, 167). There are, however, no traces of interest in another Scandinavian saint, the earl of Orkney, Magnus, murdered *c.* 1117 (Mackinlay 1914, 301). Rosemary Power has observed that the development of Magnus's cult in the Northern Isles may reflect the existence of a distinctively local, independent, Christian identity there, while the Hebrides (as represented by their dedications) were more integrated into the Christianity of the Irish Sea (Power 1990, 20). Although Irish dedications need not signify unbroken observance, as revival could have occurred before memory of earlier associations had been lost, David Dumville has made the point that churches which were the focus of cults of saints with particularly strong local associations would have been a potentially tenacious force for continuity, despite the disruption of larger ecclesiastical institutions. He also noted that such cults must have had problems sustaining themselves if ecclesiastical training for their priests was unavailable (Dumville 1997, 18–19).

Hints of variety in the physical record of Christian practice might suggest that missionary leadership across the Scandinavianised zone was provided by different churches. There are, for example, no hogbacks in the Hebrides, Galloway, or the Isle of Man, unlike in Strathclyde and the Northern Isles, where (as in northern England) they have a Scandinavian association (Lang 1972–4). In Orkney or Shetland there are no crosses of similar form to those on the Isle of Man. Carved crosses in the Hebrides and Northern Isles, unlike the Isle of Man and Galloway (and Scandinavian England), lack figural scenes and 'pagan iconography' (apart from a single representative on Iona; Fisher 2001, 16). The use of inscriptions likewise varies: while many of the inscribed stones of the Isle of Man bear runic inscriptions along their edges, Thorgerðr's text is on the back of her memorial. It shares, however, the Manx (and Irish) use of the word *kross* (Page 1983, 135), in contrast to a runic inscription on Iona, which uses *steinn*, more typical of inscriptions in Norway. Nor are the monuments evenly distributed: there are no surviving early carved stones on Harris and Lewis, despite their four *papar*-names, while sculpture just to the south, on Taransay, the Uists, Pabbay (Barra), and Benbecula, may be of pre-Viking date (Fisher 2001, 11, 105–113). Such contrasts doubtless have various causes, including different access to suitable stone and variable survival rates, the latter relating in part to degrees of vulnerability to natural processes such as coastal erosion and sand blows. Monument-raising habits and fashion

may have varied because of differences in wealth and connection, such as the concentrated presence of the aristocratic elites with whom such sculpture is often associated. While a multiplicity of factors could have produced the pattern, we can also perhaps draw from it a suggestion that there was variety in the means available to Scandinavians when it came to manifesting their new Christian identity. This may indicate connections with different sources of Christianity in northern Britain and Ireland.

Our focus has inevitably been on the world of the Irish Sea and Atlantic seaboard, but Vikings could also operate on a larger stage. Even if we cannot trust the sources or rest weighty interpretations on the evidence of personal names, the information that the son of the ninth-century Viking leader Olaf the White was called Carlus (AFM *s.a.* 866), and that Thorfinn Skull-splitter, earl of Orkney in the tenth century, had a son called Louis (Hlodvir) (the father of Sigurd the Stout) (Guðmundsson 1965, 20; Pálsson and Edwards 1978, 33, 225), at least reminds us that Scandinavian leaders had political and economic relationships outside the immediate region. Some of these exchanges with the wider Christian world could perhaps have led at least to baptism if not to anything as interventionist as mission. Increased source-material in the eleventh century shows that outside interests were active in the region then. Henry, bishop in Orkney in the early eleventh century, had been Cnut's treasurer in England, and his presence in the North may reflect ambitions on the part of that powerful ruler ('king of the Danes, the Irish, the English and the Islanders', according to one of his poets) that are only hinted at in other sources (Hudson 1994, esp. 319). Other eleventh-century churchmen in Orkney came from York or Hamburg-Bremen, whose archbishops were apparently in competition with one another for the right to consecrate bishops in the Northern Isles (Crawford 1983, 103). Hamburg-Bremen claimed rights in Orkney because it considered itself to have had a mandate for 'the North' since the 830s, extending to notional rights over Scandinavian Christians wherever they might be (Abrams 1995, 28). There is no evidence of Hamburg-Bremen or York (or Canterbury) taking an interest in any part of Scandinavian Scotland before the eleventh century; but political and ecclesiastical links of which we have no record may have added to the ninth- and tenth-century mix.

Ascertaining the degree to which churches and churchmen functioned in the Scandinavian zone is therefore highly problematic. Certainties about what secular powers might have driven conversion forward

may be equally hard to come by, thanks to the nature of the political environment as well as the state of the evidence. In Ireland, Colman Etchingham has argued, the domains of tenth-century bishops were co-extensive with defined polities, and the authority of bishops was bound up with that of the kings who patronised them (Etchingham 1999, 187). If Christian institutions in the Scottish islands survived and were also structured in this way, the operation of episcopal power and missionary oversight in the Hebrides would have depended on those with political control. A Christian ruler could have supported a bishop whose authority was observed through his territory; a non-Christian ruler, on the other hand, would have had no such imperative to link rule with religious provision. If Christian institutions had effectively collapsed, the ecclesiastical initiative would have to have come from outside, most likely combined with secular influence. We may wonder whether any Christian overlord could have exerted consistent pressure in the region in the manner of King Alfred or Louis the Pious, however. No evidence survives of native Christian elites taking credit for promoting religious change. Only the baptism in 995 of Sigurd, earl of Orkney, by the Norwegian king Olaf Tryggvason—alleged only in late sources and, as an adequate representation of reality, rightly challenged (Morris 2004, 188)—fits the mould of forced diplomatic conversion. The earls of Orkney were potentially susceptible to political pressure from Norway, and as intermittent overlords they themselves could have exerted authority and set a religious example in the western settlements as well as at home. Royal pressure on Hebridean settlers might also be expected to have come from Ireland, but existing sources show no Irish interest in converting Scandinavians, whether allies or enemies (Abrams 1998). Other external pressures ebbed and flowed. In a world where there was no one federal power with entrenched authority, no settled court, and few if any discrete blocks of territory to grant to converts as a reward, and where allegiances appear to have been particularly fluid, there was perhaps less scope than in England and Francia for the imposition of conversion as a political act.

This does not rule out top-down conversion of another sort, however, in that the Scandinavians in charge in the Hebrides could have been influenced to convert in a less politicised context, by churchmen or Christian neighbours, and their adoption of Christianity could have led to the conversion of their followers. This potential route of influence through elite interaction is also difficult to track, however, as exactly who was in charge in the Atlantic zone is far from clear. Until the develop-

ment of a kingship of the Isles, attested only by the late tenth century, external overlords may have intermittently been able to exert a kind of federal power there, but with variable degrees of authority. Evidence for the period is slight. Alfred Smyth drew on late medieval Icelandic tradition that placed the Viking leader Ketil Flatnose in the Hebrides (Smyth 1984, 154–66; Benediktsson 1968, 50–1; Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 22–3). The Gall-Goíðil ('foreign Gaels') who accompanied him on campaign to Ireland (AU *s.a.* 856 and 857) have been the subject of much debate (Clancy forthcoming).⁶ Donnchadh Ó Corráin has argued that in the first part of the ninth century Norwegians in the Hebrides established the dynasty that went on to dominate Ireland and northern England (Ó Corráin 1998). Colmán Etchingham has pointed to fragmentary evidence suggesting overlordship of the Isles by Dublin kings in the 930s (Etchingham 2001, 167). Seán Duffy has emphasised the competitive interactions between Dublin and the Isles in the eleventh century and the latter's own aspirations of overlordship (Duffy 1992). Meanwhile, Ben Hudson and Barbara Crawford have focussed attention on Anglo-Danish ambitions (Hudson 1994b; Crawford 1999).⁷ The continental Annals of St Bertin offer the geographically imprecise information that in the mid ninth century 'the Northmen got control of the islands all around Ireland and stayed there without encountering any resistance from anyone' (ASB *s.a.* 847). The Irish annal-record has little to say other than to indicate that in the tenth century the Isles provided a base from which ambitious Scandinavian leaders—such as the sons of Olaf in the 960s and the sons of Harold in the 970s and 980s, both associated with the enigmatic *lagmainn na nInnsedh* ('lawmen of the Isles')—mounted expeditions against rivals in other parts of the Hiberno-Scandinavian zone (AFM *s.a.* 960, 972; Ó Murchadha 1987). Participants in dynastic struggles for control of the wider region no doubt appreciated the military, economic, and other strategic advantages offered by the Hebrides, and in their turn the islands felt the interest of those in control of the power centres of Orkney, Man, Dublin, and beyond. The impression given by the admittedly scarce source-material is that throughout the Viking Age the Hebrides, though tied into the

⁶ I should like to thank Thomas Clancy for discussing the Gall-Goíðil with me and for sending me a copy of his paper in advance of its publication.

⁷ Barbara Crawford has argued that the claim in *Agrip* (a late twelfth-century saga) that Earl Hákon became king of the Hebrides, courtesy of Olaf Haraldsson's intervention, is more likely to reflect some kind of authority conferred by Cnut (Crawford 1999, 113–16).

bigger Scandinavian picture, were also an area of acute micropolitics. The region appears to have been markedly strategic and quintessentially volatile, with power constantly shifting, and alliances being formed and reformed in new permutations. Power was presumably regularly negotiated, and its fluid components could include Scandinavian and native in different degrees. The lawmen of the Isles may have been the settled Scandinavian power of the region, exploited by the other players in this volatile zone.

If so, the sources tell us nothing about the lawmen's domestic side. It seems likely, however, that the twelfth-century chieftains whose activities are reported in the *Chronicle of the Kings of Man and the Isles* (Broderick 1973) had Viking-Age predecessors. Local Scandinavian chieftains—such as, perhaps, the families in residence at the Udal (North Uist) or Cille Pheadair and Bornais (South Uist) (Crawford 1981, 265–7; Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999)—may have been the real power on the ground. The runestone on Barra may have been raised by such a family, headed by Thorgerðr's father, Steinar. The nature of the authority of such chieftains could have had parallels with that of Jarlabanki, who 'owned' a hundred and 'made' a thing-place in Uppland in Sweden in the eleventh century (Sawyer 2000, 93, 137–9).⁸ The impulse for group conversion might have come from this class of men, exercising the kind of authority seen in later times, as when Godred Olafsson returned from Norway to claim power in Man in 1153 and the chieftains of the Isles (*principes insularum*) 'at an assembly unanimously elected him their king' (*conuenientes in unum ipsum unanimiter elegerunt sibi in regem*) (Broderick 1973, 16 and 65). Alternatively, the power of the chieftains could have been used to authorise what was in effect a popular movement, ratified in the local assembly, which acted as the arena of decision-making. In that case, conversion could have been formally inaugurated by a series of local, communal, decisions on the model of Iceland's vote to accept the Christian religion in 999. Less external coercive power and more local decision-making may thus be envisaged influencing settlers to adopt Christianity. The conventional pagan imagery of Orm Barreyjarskáld's verses preserved in *Skáldskaparmál* should remind us, however, that old religious allegiances may nevertheless have had some staying-power (Faulkes 1987, 89, 91, and 249).

⁸ For names of the *Thingvellir* type on Skye and Lewis, see Fellows-Jensen 1996, 21–4.

If conversion in the Hebrides took place not primarily through compulsion but through peer pressure and emulation, there would naturally have been a significant role for indigenous populations—although their very existence is an issue of continuing controversy (Crawford 1981; Barrett 2003b, 91–9). The role of influential Scandinavian converts could potentially have been as important as that of any Christian survivors, and it may therefore have been relevant that some settlers had a previous history of involvement in Ireland. Although the assumption that all Vikings who allied with the Irish were quickly converted to Christianity goes beyond the evidence (Abrams 1998), there may be some truth in the later claim that several noteworthy Icelandic settlers with Irish connections, such as the family of Ketil Flatnose, were Christian. *Landnámabók*, the thirteenth-century history of Iceland's settlement, claimed that Ketil's daughter Aud the Deep-Minded, who had lived in Ireland and the Hebrides before emigrating to Iceland, was 'a devout Christian' who was buried on an Icelandic beach at the high-water mark because 'having been baptised, she didn't wish to lie in unconsecrated earth' (Benediktsson 1968, 138–40, 146–7; Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 51–2 and 55). *Landnámabók* also claimed that others who came from the Hebrides, such as Helgi the Lean and Ketil the Foolish (grandson of Ketil Flatnose), were Christian (Benediktsson 1968, 136, 250–2, 322; Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 51, 97, and 123). Orlyggr Hrapsson, also a relative of Ketil Flatnose, was even said to have been fostered by the (otherwise unidentified) 'holy bishop Patrick of the Hebrides' before going to Iceland. *Landnámabók* describes how the bishop provided Orlyggr with a starter-kit for a church to be dedicated to St Columba, which Orlyggr proceeded to build at Esjuberg (Benediktsson 1968, 52–5; Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 22–4). Later tradition did not claim that Christianity among the early settlers had borne permanent fruit, however. *Landnámabók* says that after settling, Aud's kinsmen in Iceland 'lost the faith' (Benediktsson 1968, 146–7; Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 55), and no Church was established in the new colony. However, projecting a Christian identity back into the past helped medieval Icelanders to legitimise the largely pagan culture of their settlement period. Later historical literature is unreliable evidence on the subject, reflecting the mixed feelings of Christian descendants towards their founding fathers (and mothers). In *Laxdæla saga*, for instance, although other elements of the story of Aud's death are the same, she is given a traditional ship-burial, and there is no hint of Christianity (Sveinsson 1934, 11–13; Magnusson and Pálsson 1969, 57).

Things might have been different if *Landnámabók's* Bishop Patrick had accompanied Orlyggr to Iceland's New World. In Barbara Crawford's view the process of Christianisation rested on diocesan organisation and episcopal leadership: 'permanent conversion and the creation of a Christian society was never established by missionising only, it needs a system of churches and hierarchy of priests'. A Christian society and its institutional Church, however, were dependent on lay power: 'the Church only flourished in a stable political situation where ecclesiastical order could be imposed, and in a favourable political climate, where it was protected and endowed' (Crawford 1983, 102). In the Northern Isles, protection and endowment were supplied by the eleventh-century earls of Orkney, whose internal and international political interests drove them to exploit the possibilities of episcopal patronage. But as the operation of political power in the Hebrides remains obscure, so does the connection between religious institutions and the authority of chieftains and kings of the Isles. Apart from the unprovenanced Bishop Patrick, episcopal authority was located at Iona in the tenth century by Irish annalists (or at least individual bishops were): in the *Annals of Roscrea*, Fothad mac Briain was described as *episcopus Innsi Alban* ('bishop of the islands of Alba') and Muirón as *ab Iae, scriba optimus atque sui-episcop na Trí Rand* ('abbot of Iona, excellent scribe and learned/pre-eminent bishop of the Three Parts') (Gleeson and MacAirt 1957–9, 170–1; also AFM *s.a.* 961 and 978). Etchingham has pointed out that, although annalists identified no bishops at Iona between 739 and the mid tenth century, it is 'scarcely credible' that bishops were not required for the normal operation of the church (Etchingham 1999, 92). Whether they had authority in any way coterminous with the domain of the later bishops of the Isles is less clear. When a fixed diocesan centre was established in the twelfth century by the kings of the Isles, it was not at Iona but on the Isle of Man.

There may, of course, have been more than one bishop in the region, or at least more than one diocesan centre for whoever exercised episcopal functions in this western maritime zone. A Bishop Wmund was based on Skye during the first half of the twelfth century (Woolf 2003, 173), for example, and earlier bishops may have had multiple seats, moving from one to another on a regular basis. Only later did they acquire 'real' cathedrals, 'with enough powers and rights to run [their bishoprics] without recourse to the secular arm' (Crawford 1983, 112). Later medieval historians of the diocese of the *Sudreyar* (ON 'southern isles', later 'Sodor' in English) admitted that they had no information

on bishops much before the late eleventh century. Heading the episcopal list in the *Chronicle of the Kings of Man and the Isles* is one Roolwer, presumably ON Hrolfr, who was bishop 'before the reign of Godred Crovan' (Broderick 1973, 48 and 83; Woolf 2003, 171–2). Roolwer's successors bore Norman or English names, suggesting that Godred (king of Man c. 1079–95) may have been the driving force behind the association of ecclesiastical government with a single bishop, with links to York. After 1152–3 and the creation of the new archdiocese of the North, based in Trondheim, the *Sudreyar* were officially detached from English ecclesiastical responsibility and their Norwegian connection reaffirmed, although the actual extent of Norwegian influence is debatable (Power 2003, 431–2).

Bishops loomed large in Barbara Crawford's model of the conversion of the Northern Isles, which envisaged a significant role for mission sponsored equally by bishop and earl: 'localities became thoroughly converted by established missionising priests who were under the direction of the bishop and the protection of the secular authority.' This was followed by a 'great burst of private chapel-building by individual families'. This chapel-building occurred 'in all the areas of Norse settlement in Scotland' (Crawford 1987, 180), as it did in Iceland. In Norway, on the other hand, 'most churches... were public in the sense that they were built either by the king or the community and were related to the administrative structure.' Scandinavian settlements in Scotland, she suggested, were served by a mixture of public and private churches (Crawford 1987, 178). In contrast, Christopher Morris, questioning the official conversion-story and the role it gave to Orkney's earls in inaugurating religious change, has argued that Scandinavians in the Northern Isles became Christian long before the much publicised baptism of Sigurd the Stout and his son at the hands of Olaf Trygvason in 995 (Morris 2004, 195; Guðmundsson 1965, 25–6; Pálsson and Edwards 1978, 37). In Morris's view, we have failed to distinguish between the adoption of Christianity 'at the higher political level', on which the written sources dwell, and the adoption of Christianity by individuals, which was gradual and unrecorded and began early. The first Scandinavian churches in Orkney were, according to Morris, private chapels, built by chieftains next to their halls and farmsteads (Morris 2004, 187–8). Stefan Brink has similarly proposed that private churches were a feature of the earliest stages of Christianity in parts of Scandinavia (2004, 172–5), anticipating by many years the activities of eleventh-century landowners such as Eyvind, St Olaf's godson, whose runestone in Oddernes

(West-Agder, Norway) proclaims that he 'made this church on his family farm (*odal*)' (Sawyer 2000, 139). James Barrett's hypothesis, that there were competing factions of pagans and Christians in Orkney, divided along political as well as religious lines, also envisages significant conversion before 995 (Barrett 2003a).

Morris's interpretation of conversion in Scandinavian Scotland has drawn particularly on the results of excavations at chapel-sites in Orkney (Morris 1989, 20–8). His focus has since shifted northward, where the Shetland Chapel-Sites Project aims to survey the northern islands of Shetland, combining information about sites, landscape, place-names, and folk-traditions to create 'a map of Norse Christianity' there (Morris 2004, 188–94). Meanwhile Orkney's chapel-sites have helped to develop a new interpretative structure for Scandinavian Christianity (Barrett 2003a, 211–18), as mid-tenth-century coins at Deerness and Newark Bay have shown the chapels to have been in use before the traditional conversion date. Furthermore, the association of some of the many later medieval chapels on Orkney with pre-Viking sculpture has led to the hypothesis that the later buildings had Viking-Age predecessors, contemporary with the coin-dated sites, which were imposed by chieftains on the remnants of a pre-Viking organisation.

Orkney's chapels, with the exception of a lucky few, remain largely undated, so it is as yet unclear how many of them derive from the beginnings of Scandinavian Christianity. In addition, the difficulty of distinguishing between 'native' and 'Norse' leaves open the identity of their founders, if surviving indigenous Christianity is envisaged (and Morris has seen 'a case for survival'; Morris 2004, 184). The chapels' origins are additionally complicated by difficulties in establishing the nature of their use: sites such as Deerness and the Brough of Birsay, for example, were once interpreted as monastic. Morris has acknowledged that until excavation is extended to more sites, the question remains open (Morris 1989, 28), but archaeology alone may not be able to establish the difference between monastic and secular, nor between 'public' and 'private'. Deerness and Newark Bay having been identified as early, they—and, by extension, other chapels—have been interpreted as proprietary, and Morris has suggested that they remained outside episcopal authority until the development of parochial organisation in the twelfth century. His model of the conversion of Orkney therefore proposed that Christianity had been gradually adopted by local land-owners, outside the context of episcopal and 'public' or 'state' structures. (Morris 1985, 235).

The landscape of chieftains' chapels envisaged for Viking-Age Orkney is part of a bigger picture. Between the beginning of the Viking Age and the twelfth century the ecclesiastical map of the region seems to have been redrawn as smaller churches and chapels replaced the network of religious houses of the early Christian period. Our understanding of this reconfiguration in Orkney and the rest of Scandinavian Scotland must, however, take into account the fact that similar developments occurred elsewhere. 'Private' or proprietary churches were 'ubiquitous through the early medieval west' (Blair 2005, 393; Wood 2006). In England, for example, the early Anglo-Saxon Church manifested itself primarily through religious communities, whereas from the tenth century seigneurial churches, owned by their lords, proliferated. These churches developed within 'state' Christianity, not as an alternative to it. Ninth-century Carolingian capitularies regulated the construction of proprietary churches, requiring the consent of the bishop; tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings made laws to ensure that such churches (and especially their incomes) did not elude episcopal control (Blair 2005, 439–44). Behind the proliferation of smaller foundations lay significant changes in lordship and manorial organisation, in the provision of pastoral care (including burial), and in the manifestation of status and deployment of patronage (Blair 2005, 368–95)—social forces not exclusive to England and the Continent. If proprietary churches in England and Francia served as infilling within an episcopally controlled landscape of larger jurisdictions, their identification in Scandinavian Scotland with an alternative organisation, predating other structures, may perhaps be questioned. The chapel at Kilbar, where Thorgerðr's runestone was raised, may have 'belonged' to her or her father, or it could have been a link in a chain of churches under a bishop's supervision. Except perhaps when it came to tithes or other financial considerations, such a distinction might in fact have mystified its users. Even 'private' chapels could have been established through programmes of evangelisation sponsored by bishops or secular rulers. Although hereditary priests could perhaps have manned churches and provided pastoral care independent of episcopal oversight for a while, it was probably more difficult for new foundations to be established without institutional back-up.

Thanks to the excavation of significant ecclesiastical sites in the Northern Isles and the high profile of the Orkney earldom in the literary sources, the narrative of conversion among the settlers of Scandinavian Scotland has been driven by its example, and notions derived from its

particular evidence have understandably been exported to the Hebrides. If nothing else, however, the distribution of *papar*-names, saints' cults, and sculpture provides glimpses of regionalities which we do not at present understand. Orkney became the centre of a great comital domain, whereas power in the Hebrides is less easy to quantify and may always have been more diffuse. Any attempt to generalise from one to the other may therefore be misleading. The model of proliferating private religion, for example, derives from chapels such as Deerness, but no contemporary chapel-sites have been investigated in the Hebrides, and excavation at two South Uist farmsteads has as yet found no evidence for churches (or burials) near the domestic buildings (Sharples and Parker Pearson 1999). Investigation of a settlement mound on the headland at Cnip on Lewis, where a cemetery of furnished and unfurnished graves has been excavated, might change this picture (Dunwell *et al.* 1995). Although there are no certain facts about the native inhabitants of either the Northern Isles or the Hebrides, thanks to our ignorance of pre-existing polities, the societies the Scandinavians met when they settled could have been quite different in their social and political as well as religious norms, and secular and ecclesiastical survival may also have varied significantly. Despite the crippling paucity of evidence, it is therefore worth considering whether Scandinavians in the Hebrides engaged with Christians and Christian institutions in different ways from their northern contemporaries.

As we have seen, there is little evidence of high-profile political conversions or missionary campaigns in the Hebrides. Instead, we have a variety of possible contexts for religious conversion, suited to different frameworks of diplomatic and domestic intercourse. Although this makes generalisations difficult, it may be fair to say that the conversion of the Hebridean settlers does not appear to have been a monolithic enterprise, led from one centre. More likely, successes occurred at different times in different places, dependent as the process was on shifting issues of lordship, status, and identity. I began this paper with the suggestion that understanding conversion could help us to understand the bigger picture of Scandinavian assimilation and acculturation. I would now conclude that lack of evidence forces us to face the question from another direction: we need instead to consider whether what little we know about Scandinavian society in the Hebrides can help to suggest how religious change might have occurred. Despite an absence of evidence on the social and political setting as well, some tentative observations can perhaps be made. It may be safe to say, for

example, that there was no high-status native survival; that until quite late there was no territorial kingship, and no permanent aristocratic presence linked to kings elsewhere; that there was a powerful class of chieftains, or an even less stratified society of farmers, fighters, and fishermen; that thanks to its strategic location, a sequence of external heavy-hitters passed through the region, all with ambitions to dominate, or something to offer—or both. Under the circumstances, a conversion powered by a single dominant secular power seems unlikely, and it is possible that Christianity was disseminated by men and women of local importance. Their decisions would have been influenced by a range of factors: marriages, fosterings, hostage-takings, military alliances, trading contacts, and lordship and patronage networks—all the ways that people came into contact—not to mention the impact of charismatic Christian professionals. Conversion was probably characterised by a multiplicity of reactions to Christianity, involving the dynamics between men and women, immigrant and native, overlords and chieftains, fishing and farming households and the outside world. At one end of the spectrum of change we can envisage slow and steady neighbourly interaction; at the other, the heated intensity of war and cut-throat competition for power. Where the two Barra women belonged on this spectrum is unclear; their monuments nonetheless manifest in the local landscape a transition of broader proportions. The redefinition of religious identity did not happen in isolation, but was just one strand in the wider experience of colonisation through which Scandinavian settlers created a new culture in the West.

The Christianity attributed to Aud the Deep-Minded (in one tradition, if not another) reminds us that in early medieval conversion narratives, it was often the women who first recognised the virtue of the new faith. In the seventh century, Pope Boniface had written to Queen Æthelburh, a Christian, urging her to influence her husband, Edwin, king of Northumbria, who had not yet been baptised: *saluabitur uir infidelis per mulierem fidelem* ('The unbelieving husband shall be saved by the believing wife') (HE ii.11, echoing I Cor. 7:14; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, 174–5). Perhaps Thorgerðr, Steinar's daughter, was just such a trail-blazer. Her runestone has been taken to signify the acceptance of Christianity among the Scandinavian settlers of the Hebrides; it could on the other hand have been a memorial to a trendsetter, a woman of influence, who helped to steer her community away from the burial grounds of the past and towards the new force that would bind them and their descendants into the fabric of Christian society.

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A NORWEGIAN IN DURHAM:
AN ANATOMY OF A MIRACLE IN REGINALD OF
DURHAM'S *LIBELLUS DE ADMIRANDIS BEATI CUTHBERTI*¹

Haki Antonsson, Sally Crumplin and Aidan Conti

Introduction

Early last century Edvard Bull noted that Reginald of Durham's *Libellus Cuthberti* included information which was of relevance to the early history of monasticism in Norway. He referred to a miracle-account (Raine 1835, 248–54) about a Norwegian who recovers his health at the shrine of St Cuthbert in 1172 which mentions a religious community in a place called 'Steingrave'. Bull observed that the spelling of this place-name in the single manuscript witness to *Libellus Cuthberti* corresponds closely to the common medieval spelling of Stavanger (Bull 1911). This represents the earliest written evidence for the existence of a religious house in that town. In his *Folk og kirke i middelalderen* Bull loosely rendered the text of the miracle into Norwegian and briefly discussed some of its more distinctive features (Bull 1912, 210–19). Not long thereafter another leading Norwegian medievalist, Magnus Olsen, attempted to identify the family from Western Norway which stands at the centre of the miracle. Although the main protagonist of the miracle is not named, his brother is called 'Scheleir' in the margin of the manuscript, which appears to be a mangled form of the name Skjálgr. Olsen pointed out that Skjálgr was a name particularly associated with the family of Sola which in the eleventh century came to some prominence in Western Norway. The father of the young man is referred to as Turolv (or Þórólfr) which is also the name of the father of Erlingr Skjálgsson (c. 975–1028), the powerful chieftain who

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with some justification can be called the *Stammwater* of the Sola family (Olsen 1914). In an article of 1962 Asgaut Steinnes looked at both the monastic community in Stavanger and the Sola family and noted that the latter had been major patrons of the Church within its sphere of influence in Vestlandet. This would, of course, explain the willingness of the Stavanger community to accept the young man for education (Steinness 1962, 19–20).

In what follows I wish to show that in addition to the contributions of Bull, Olsen and Steinnes there are aspects of the miracle which deserve further comment. I shall first consider the construction of this text and then highlight some of its most interesting themes.

The Miracle and its Components

The process of recording miracles was by no means uniform. To begin with, the recipient and the recorder of the miracle could be one and the same person. Thus in the *miracula* of St Ólafr Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson (1161–88) tells how the saint restored him to health after his fall from scaffolding in Nidaros Cathedral (Phelpstead 2001, 62–3). Miracles that were effected away from the shrine could be reported second hand. In the same *miracula* St Ólafr rescues a child from fire in the district of Møre; this story was written down ‘from the testimony of people from that neighbourhood, and it has been clearly confirmed by the donation of money that we have received’ (Phelpstead 2001, 54–5). The guardians of a shrine sometimes wrote down miracles they had witnessed themselves or might record the actual testimony of the recipient of the miracle. As the cult of the saints became increasingly formalized from the second half of the twelfth century it was this final option that became to some extent the ideal way to record miracles.

Our miracle account can be seen as a hybrid of the last two categories mentioned above. It is safe to assume that Reginald of Durham composed the finished version of the text—the version which appears in *Libellus Cuthberti*—sometime between 1172 and 1174 (see Crumplin, this volume). The testimony of the Norwegian visitors, of course, forms the basis of the whole account. Thus when the young man from Bergen was finally restored to full health he explained, in Latin, the tale of his deliverance to a crowd at Durham Cathedral. This took place on the Feast of the Holy Cross (3 May) 1172. But we are also told that the youth knew nothing about the period of his illness. Accordingly

his personal testimony was confined to the onset of his affliction, and during and after his recovery. The missing part of the miracle, and the crucial component, was provided by his brother, Scheleir, who had been present at the onset of the malady which occurred at a tavern, and who had escorted his brother from shrine to shrine for six years. It is important to stress, however, that Reginald would have accessed all this information second hand, perhaps exclusively, from the written account made by the sacrist, who had the primary responsibility for recording miracles at Cuthbert's shrine (Crumplin 2004, 201–2). The miracle provides a hint of this process when it tells that when the brothers arrived in Durham, Scheleir 'clearly explained the entire course of the aforesaid malady to the guardian of the tomb'. It is the record of the warden, which has not survived, that Reginald probably shaped according to his style and preferences.

It is difficult to distinguish Reginald of Durham's input from the Norwegian testimonies. A case in point is the description of how the youth's parents sought guidance from a certain Norwegian bishop. The bishop, who is not named, proclaimed that while he had travelled widely, he had never encountered greater purveyors of miraculous power than St Cuthbert and St Edmund. Adding to this list the parvenu St Thomas of Canterbury (who would not have been canonized at this point), the bishop cast lots three times to decide between them and, on each occasion, Cuthbert's name appears. The casting or drawing of lots in order to gauge the will of the divine was, of course, not an exclusively Christian practice. In *Germania* Tacitus tells how among the Germanic tribes either a priest or the head of the family would draw lots three times with slips carved with runes (Hutton 1914, ch. 10). In Alcuin's *Life of Willibrord*, composed at the end of the eighth century, King Radbod cast lots three times for three days to decide the missionary he should take revenge on for the desecration of a pagan shrine (Reischmann 1989, 11; Bartlett 1998, 61–2). Another *Life* of a missionary, Rimbert's *Vita Anskari*, describes how the pagan Swedes consulted the will of the gods through the casting of lots (Waitz 1884, ch. 10). Although never condoned by the Church, casting (or drawing) of lots was practised in the Middle Ages within a Christian context, no doubt sustained by the many references to it in the Bible (Wood 1996, 260). In miracle accounts it is a method which is sometimes used to decide between two or more saints and, in fact, in certain regions of France it survived for this purpose well into the modern period (Finucane 1995, 85). The casting of lots appears in other *miracula* from the Scandinavian

lands. For example, in a collection of St Magnús's miracles, compiled in the second half of the twelfth century, a certain Þorlákr from Shetland cast lots 'to discover what he should promise, a pilgrimage to Rome, freedom for a slave, or a gift of money to the shrine of the holy Earl Magnus' (Pálsson & Edwards 1981, 107). *Miracula S Erixi*, written around 1310, tells that when King Birgir Magnusson of Sweden (1290–1318) became ill his steward decided to cast lots between St Nicholas, St Ólafr and St Erik. It was the name of St Erik that appeared three times and as a result the steward travelled to Uppsala with an offering from the king, who was subsequently restored to full health (Geijer & Schröder 1828, 67). Whether in 1171 a Norwegian bishop applied the same method is, of course, impossible to tell but my suspicion is that Reginald's creative hand is here at work for in another miracle in the same section of the *Libellus Cuthberti* Reginald describes the casting of lots between the very same trio of saints (Raine 1835, 260). St Edmund of East Anglia and St Thomas of Canterbury appear to be handpicked by Reginald to demonstrate St Cuthbert's superior miraculous power vis-à-vis his saintly counterparts. The inclusion of a Norwegian bishop in the proceedings, especially one who had 'been made an anchorite for a year after the martyrdom of St Thomas', could only enhance the *gravitas* of the lot-casting.

Reginald's obvious delight in the art of description is amply displayed in our account and is perhaps most conspicuous in the exceedingly detailed, and some might find excessive, reportage of the Norwegian's illness. A notable feature of Reginald's style is his use of repetition and intra-textual echoes to shape his text. An obvious example of the former is the frequent occurrence of the number three. Thus the young man eats 'scarcely three morsels' of food; the Norwegian bishop casts lots three times to decide between three saints; Cuthbert appears three times before him in a vision and has him turn his head three times. Whether this has any symbolic meaning is exceedingly uncertain although it is worth noting that around the time Reginald wrote his account, an Icelandic monk composed a skaldic praise-poem *Leiðarvísan*, 'Guidance', around the number three, denoting the Trinity (Astås 1993, 390). Reginald uses intra-textual echoes to great effect to link the impact of the illness when it first afflicts the youth with his relief from the malady at Durham. When the full force of the illness has struck the youth, he is left blind, dumb and without control of his own body. To illustrate his terrible state, Reginald notes that even his eyes revolved 'like the very swift turning of chariot wheels'. Later, when the healing

power of St Cuthbert begins to take effect, the youth emerges out of Durham Cathedral and looks down the valley, where he sees 'rims and spokes of mill-wheels turning in the current of the river. At first he thought these were the heads of men, for the novelty of amazement, as it were, created images of fancy in a kind of vision.' The vivid images of turning mill-wheels, which clearly mirror his own rotating head, are applied to bring home the depth of the young man's suffering and the initial revelation of his future deliverance. Another notable example of how Reginald shapes his text through an intra-textual echo concerns the young man's reaction to his first vision of St Cuthbert. He panics and in his confusion he thinks he is being attacked by a robber intent on stealing his belongings. This response is explained by an earlier incident where the youth and his brother were assaulted and robbed by Scottish brigands 'with half-naked rumps' on their way to Durham. In the young man's distorted mind the vision of Cuthbert evokes a memory of this event and triggers his violent response. Cuthbert's appearance to the youth also counterbalances the vision or phantasm which prompted the illness in the first place. Clad in white Cuthbert is the benevolent inverse of the black, hostile, woman who condemns the young man to eternal suffering.

The black woman is the bringer of chaos into the young man's world and only St Cuthbert is able to restore it to proper order. We are told that when everyone wondered about the cause of the young man's sudden illness, 'he began to declare that a certain woman blacker than soot had appeared to him in his dreams.' In the Middle Ages the state of slumber was perceived as a condition in which people were particularly vulnerable to demonic experiences. While asleep young men, often monks, were prey to *succubi*, that is demons in the disguise of alluring women who forced them to have sexual intercourse. Conversely sleep could be associated with healing. Most notably, there was a tradition, extending back to late antiquity, of pilgrims spending the night near the tomb 'with the expectation that the Saint would visit during sleep and either immediately heal the incubant or give advice for a successful treatment' (Grossmann 1998, 289). Indeed it is through this act of incubation that the young Norwegian regains his health.

The young man's health had been destroyed, however, by the black woman who in her ferocious assault had 'violently twisted the head of the sleeper' and 'with her hand of unnatural strength she struck more serious blows to various parts of the body successively'. Her colour, of course, has been associated with Satan and his minions since late

antiquity; in Athanasius's fourth-century Life of St Anthony the Devil appears to the saint 'just as he is in his mind, as a black boy' (Head 2000, 10). But it is noteworthy that Reginald does not explicitly present the woman as the devil in disguise or as one of his demonic messengers. Rather the scene, as allegedly described by the young man, recalls those involving the so-called *mörur* of Scandinavian tradition, women, of either hideous or beautiful appearance, who attack men in their sleep. Stories of such phenomena are found in Scandinavian literature from the medieval period well into the modern era (Raudvere 1993, 3–59). The earliest example is in Snorri Sturluson's *Ynglinga* saga, composed c. 1230 but relying on the late ninth-century *Ynglingatal* as its source. Here, King Vanlandi of Sweden is molested in his sleep by a troll-women or *mara*. The *mara* first goes for Vanlandi's head but when his retainers come to his rescue, the *mara* crushes the king's legs and finally chokes him to death (Aðalbjarnarson 1941, 29). Provisions for such nocturnal assailants in law-codes show that they were taken seriously in medieval Scandinavia (Tillhagen 1966, 344). It is perhaps not too far fetched to suggest that behind Reginald's account we can glimpse evidence of how the young man may have himself interpreted his sudden and brutal illness within the context of such a tradition. The appearance of folkloric elements in miracle accounts is not unknown, even in cases where the account is based on direct personal testimony. For example, the above mentioned *miracula* of St Ólafr relates that a certain youth had told Archbishop Eysteinn, and before him a priest, about a remarkable experience he had had when travelling to work on a farmstead (Phelpstead 2001, 64–7). Two beautiful women approached the youth and led him into a cave in a rock-wall where amidst 'a countless throng of merry-makers and eaters', he was plied with food, drink and finally 'with other most desirable things of every kind'. The youth began to have second thoughts about this revelry and when the proceedings turned nasty he called on St Ólafr for deliverance, who saved him from what turned out to be the devil and his entourage. In this story we encounter a contemporary of the young men in Reginald's miracle, albeit from the opposite end of the social spectrum, interpreting his experience within a well-known Norwegian folkloric tradition of humans charmed to participate in the revelry of the hidden people, often in mountains or cliffs (*bergtakning*) (Bø 1987, 48–64).

Whatever her origin or identity, the black woman leaves the youth entirely helpless and he is entrusted to the care of his family. Familial

support is a common theme in medieval miracle accounts: when a person is incapacitated through illness or injury it often falls on a relative to aid the afflicted in seeking cure at the shrine. But in other cases it is precisely the family's failure to provide such care that spurs the saint to intervene on behalf of the person in need. An illustration of this can be found in the miracles of St Etheldreda of Ely, compiled around the time Reginald composed his *Libellus Cuthberti*. The miracle tells of a certain knight from Norfolk who without warning is struck down by an illness that left him paralysed and deprived of his senses. As in Reginald's account physicians were unable to offer relief, but, unlike the family of the young man, the knight's was thrown into a permanent state of despair:

Now that his wife and his household of children and servants had seen him afflicted by this illness, so unusual generally unheard of, they had long foregone every type of joy; then, as a consequence of their excessive unhappiness, they came to hate—not happiness, I am not saying that—but the memory of him, and they assumed a lugubrious demeanor, so to speak, not so much in body as in mind (Fairweather 2005, 333).

Deprived of familial assistance it was only through the intervention of a stranger, to whom St Etheldreda is revealed in a vision, that the knight was brought to and cured at her shrine in Ely Cathedral. In contrast, the family of the young man in Reginald's account is very much in the foreground and, in fact, plays a pivotal role in the progression of the narrative. At the beginning of the narrative we are told that it was the youth's father who chose to send his son to the court of King Ingi. During the evening in the tavern the young man's, presumably older, brother unsuccessfully tried to get him home. Moreover, when the youth had been overcome his parents were broken by grief and, to begin with, kept him within the confines of their home. His parents, however, finally entrusted him to his brother, Scheleir, who accompanied him all over the Northern World in search of a cure. When this proves futile the youth's parents once again take the initiative and, as mentioned earlier, consult the Norwegian bishop who guides them to Cuthbert. The parents subsequently provide their two sons with an ample travel-fund for their pilgrimage to Durham. The loyalty of the family is at the heart of the miracle and is clearly an aspect that Reginald is keen to highlight.

Education and Pilgrimage

The young man enters the court of King Ingi Haraldsson (1136–61) where he stays for six years or, according to the internal chronology of the miracle, between *c.* 1154 and *c.* 1160. The youth would have been present at the court during a turbulent period. Until 1155 Ingi had ruled in a triumvirate with his brothers Sigurðr and Eysteinn. At a meeting in Bergen that year, his co-rulers had made an abortive attempt to rid themselves of Ingi; Sigurðr was killed and two years later Ingi's henchmen put Eysteinn to the sword. Subsequently King Ingi had to confront Hákon herðibreiðr, who had been elected to kingship in 1157, and in 1161 he was killed in a battle in Oslo. There was also internal division among Ingi's followers. Indeed Edvard Bull speculated that the youth's father had him withdrawn from the court when tensions began to mount between Erlingr Skakki and Gregoríus Dagsson, two of King Ingi's most influential supporters (Bull 1912, 218).

The young man's father has him join the court to learn both the 'urbane manners of great men and the refinements of their speech'. The idea that the court could be a venue for learning was ubiquitous throughout the Middle Ages. Thus in a letter of instructions to King Louis the German, Hincmar of Rheims (806–82) wrote that the

king's court is properly called a school, that is of course of discipline, not because it consists solely of schoolmen, men bred on learning and well trained in the conventional way, but rather a school in its own right, which can be taken to mean a place of discipline, that is correction, since it corrects men's way of dressing and walking, their speech and acts, and in general holds them to the norms of restraint appropriate to a good life (Innes 2003, 60).

At the close of the Middle Ages Sir John Fortescue (died 1476) wrote in his *De laudibus legum angliae*, composed ostensibly for the instruction of the Crown Prince, Edward, that the royal household was 'the Chief academy for the nobility of England. It provides schooling in athletics, moral integrity and good manners, through which the kingdom flourishes, acquires honour and is protected against invaders' (Orme 1983, 63). In a Scandinavian context *Konungs skuggsjá*, another textbook probably written for the offspring of a king—Hákon Hákonarson of Norway 1217–63—articulates the idea that the court offers learning in courtesy and good manners (Holm-Olsen 1945, 39–41). There is evidence that Ingi's court would have been an ideal place to achieve the educational goals of the young man's father, for not long before

the youth's arrival there an archbishopric had been established in Nidaros (1152/53) and the papal legate dispatched to Norway for this purpose, Nicholas Breakspear (later Pope Adrian IV), is said to have favoured Ingi above his brothers (Bjarni Aðalbarnarson 1951, 332). Our account tells that the boy was assigned to the instruction of the royal ministers and, according to *Oratio contra clerum Norvegiae* (c. 1200), Ingi's chancellor (*fēhirðir*) and chaplain was the aforementioned Eystein Erlendsson, who had probably been educated at St Victor in Paris and in 1161 (although elected in 1157) he was the second archbishop of Nidaros (Holtmark 1931, 15).

When the young man left the court he was entrusted to a teacher with whom he was supposed to be educated for five years. At the feet of this teacher 'he learned the rudiments of instruction in many things; for the acumen of his sharp intellect and the agility of his refined mind showed themselves to be smoothly polished and rapidly cultivated'. In high and late medieval Europe it was fairly common for distinguished families to have their children taught by hired masters although, it must be stressed, Reginald's miracle provides the sole mention of such practice in Scandinavia in this period. The best recorded and celebrated case on the Continent is undoubtedly that of Guibert of Nogent (1052–c. 1124), who, in his autobiographical *Monodiae*, remarks that he slaved at the books under the tutelage of his strict master for six years (Archambault 1996, 19–21). Whether the youth held similar sentiments is unclear although it is worth observing that for some reason he did not remain for the full five years with his master.

Following his time with this teacher, the Bergen youth was moved to a religious house in *Steingrave*, or Stavanger, which, as noted earlier, has attracted some scholarly attention. His precise age at this point is not stated but, assuming he was not younger than five or six when he was sent to Ingi's court, he would now have been between twelve and fourteen years old. We are told that the boy joined the institution to 'be instructed in the more mature practices of the monks' and there is no suggestion that he took monastic vows. The next mention of the house is in a source from 1236 which refers to a St Olav's monastery but provides no hint about its allegiance. It has been argued that St Olav's was an Augustinian priory and a forerunner of the Austin house which was established in Utstein, near Stavanger, in the late thirteenth century (Helle 1975, 57; Nyberg 2000, 224). Others maintain that the reference in Reginald's account is to a Benedictine abbey. To support this hypothesis it has been argued that in the twelfth century only

Benedictines would have accepted young boys, or oblates, a practice that all but disappeared in the thirteenth century (Haug 2005A, 100). However, given that the boy did not enter the house to become a monk or a canon but rather to further his education, this can hardly be cited as evidence to justify a Benedictine presence. A more convincing case for a Benedictine community is the fact that Reginald refers to the religious as *monachi* rather than *canonici* or *clerici*, which would be expected in the case of the Augustinians (Nenseter 2003, 36; Haug 2005B, 109–10). It is, of course, debatable how much weight one should place on an incidental reference of this sort.

Whether it was of Benedictine or Austin provenance there is nothing inherently unusual about St Olav's accepting external students. From the High Middle Ages onwards there is good evidence that some religious houses ran schools for the children of the noble and rich who would not have been expected to take monastic vows. The evidence for the early Middle Ages is somewhat more ambiguous (Hildebrandt 1992, 42–5; McKitterick 1989, 216–23). In England it was primarily the Benedictine houses that accepted noble children for education, particularly sons of important benefactors (Orme 1973, 226). Some Augustinian priories nevertheless offered the same service (Gardner 1996, 83). The young Thomas Becket, son of a London merchant, was for instance a boarder at an Augustinian priory in Surrey in the 1130s (Barlow 1979, 232). Thomas did not take monastic vows although, in general, a career in the Church would have been a likely path for boys who had received comparable schooling.

The fact that Reginald's account contains the earliest reference to the learning of Latin in Norway, or for that matter any sort of formal schooling, underlines how little we know about the provision of education in twelfth-century Scandinavia in general. In Iceland schools of some sort were found at the two bishoprics, Skálholt and Hólar, and farms of prominent chieftain families, such as Oddi in the twelfth and Stafaholt in the thirteenth century; the small early religious houses may have also offered education of some kind to outsiders. In the Nordic countries we know that this kind of education was provided at the cathedrals of Lund, Roskilde, Odense, Ribe and Viborg (Olson 1963). The last mentioned is of particular interest because there we find evidence for a school open to external students. The late twelfth-century *Vita et Miracula Sancti Ketilli*, tells that Kjeld, a regular canon and later provost at the Augustinian cathedral chapter in Viborg, was a teacher (*magister*) to boys (Gertz 1908–12, 263). I would suggest that

in Stavanger we also find a similar combination of, and probable interaction between, a religious house, a cathedral and a school for young men. However, it is not until 1217 that we have definite proof of the existence of cathedral schools proper in Norway—in Nidaros (Lárusson 1963); and in Stavanger at the end of the thirteenth century (Helle 1975, 108).

The events recounted in the miracle take place in a period when the influence of European Latin learning first becomes noticeable in Norway. Thus, following the establishment of the archbishopric of Nidaros in 1152/53, an unknown author composed the so-called *Historia Norvegiae*, which in its surviving form, narrates the history of Norway from the earliest times to the arrival of St Ólafr on the scene in 1015. Around 1170 Theodoricus *monachus* wrote another *Historia* of Norway in Latin which displays considerable knowledge of ancient and medieval authors. A decade or so later *Passio* and *Miracula* of St Ólafr were completed under the auspices of Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson, who probably also oversaw the writing of *Canones Nidrosienses*, a collection of ecclesiastical decrees which attests to an intimate knowledge of Gratian's *Decretum* (Skånland 1969). This corpus of work shows that individuals in the upper echelons of the Norwegian Church participated in the wider movement of learning which is sometimes referred to as the Twelfth-Century Renaissance (Mortensen 2005). There is no doubt that these Norwegian intellectuals had acquired their education abroad and, in fact, there is evidence that some had stayed at St Victor near Paris, arguably one of the most influential centres of learning in twelfth-century Christendom (Johnsen 1943–6). Indeed one would think that the free-lance *magister* with whom the young man concludes his formal education had been schooled outside Norway. The youth's educational career should be seen within this same context of growing interest in, and thus availability of, learning in late twelfth-century Norway. The simple fact that such educational opportunities were available at all in Norway underlines the fact that the kingdom was hardly the intellectual backwater sometimes envisaged. It must, of course, be acknowledged that the young man and his family are not exactly representative of Norwegians in this period. The father, we are told, was a wealthy priest, and the family had relations with both the king and the Church as evidenced by the youth's visits to the court and cloister.

A note of caution is also called for in the use of Reginald's account as a source for Norwegian conditions in the second half of the twelfth century. While there seems no reason to question the basic outline of

his account, it is Reginald who shapes the narrative to conform to his own agenda. This is especially clear from the description of the youth who is introduced as a being 'of an exceedingly excellent nature'. Later a reference is made to the 'acumen of his sharp intellect and the agility of his refined mind' and, following his eventual cure, the monks present,

saw this man who on the previous day had been nearly mad, senseless, half alive, blind and dumb, with neither beauty nor grace, and now they looked upon a most healthy man, flush and sensible, who was able to see and hear, as well as hold and extend his head in a naturally upright manner.

The emphasis here is on the contrast between the youth's pitiable state during the illness and his elegant deportment before and after it. The same contrast is stressed when he has told the story about the black woman:

As he spoke, he moved all the listeners or on-lookers to tearful laments because, on account of his innate good sense and grace, he appeared loveable to all. And the more refined in the eyes of every one of his friends had been his amiability and the graceful excellence of his manners previously, the more severe was their desolate grief.

Reginald presents the young man as a paragon of learning and graceful deportment whose innate virtues have been honed at the court, in the school and with a *magister*. In essence the youth embodies the virtues that one would expect a twelfth-century monk of considerable learning to admire: nobility of birth, familiarity with Latin and, above all, dignified and elegant manners which are the outward display of a righteous mind. The young man's natural disposition is disciplined through imitating his master and obeying him in all matters so that the 'favour of the teacher might be greater towards him'. He learns through the method that stretches back to Classical times and permeated higher learning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This form of instruction presupposed a 'life shared by master and students, the imparting of the teacher's qualities to the student by force of example' (Jaeger 1987, 586). In the words of William of Conches (died c. 1154) the 'best course is to follow in the footsteps of men of eminence, if they walked the right path. We must choose a good man and hold his image ever before our mind's eye, and thus we will live as if he were observing our each and every act' (Jaeger 1994, 79). It is when the young man reverses the natural roles and leads the master to the

tavern that tragedy strikes and his graceful and harmonious exterior is replaced by the grotesque spectacle of his illness.

The young man's pilgrimage can thus be seen as an extended act of penance that culminates in his deliverance at the shrine of St Cuthbert. But the pilgrimage itself is also of interest from a historical perspective for it represents one of the earliest surviving references to a Scandinavian travelling to a shrine of a foreign saint in search of healing. It is, of course, well established that Scandinavian kings and princes were keen to visit the two holiest places in Christendom, Rome and the Holy Land. For instance, Magnús Skeggjason's *Eiríksdrápa* tells of Erik Ejegod's pilgrimage to Rome, which the Danish king undertook at the close of the eleventh century. The pilgrim/crusade of his Norwegian counterpart, King Sigurðr Magnússon of Norway (1103–1130), is well documented. Runic evidence also shows that it was not unknown for ordinary people to travel to Jerusalem and, of course, Abbot Nikólás of Munka-Þverá compiled a travel-guide to Rome in the first half of the twelfth century (Jesch 2005, 132–3). However, apart from these two high-prestige destinations—Rome and Jerusalem—there is scant evidence relating to pilgrimage of Scandinavians outside the Norse area. Pilgrimage of Norwegians to the shrine of Becket in Canterbury is attested in the twelfth century. William of Canterbury's *Miracula* of St Thomas (1172–4) records two Norwegian visitors to his shrine (Robertson 1875, 466–7) and the same text also tells that a certain Sven, a canon of Lund, vowed to embark on a pilgrimage when he was healed by Becket (*ibid.*, 544–5). One can also mention that a pilgrim ampulla from Canterbury, dated to before 1220, was discovered in the excavations of the Hanseatic Wharf in Bergen (Herteig 1969, 207–9; Alexander & Binski 1987, cat. 44). But in general shrines such as St Ólafr's in Nidaros, Knud Lavard's in Ringsted and St Magnús's in Kirkwall provided local alternatives for those seeking spiritual benefits or physical healing. This point is highlighted in Reginald's narrative for the youth and his brother visit all the shrines, real or imaginary, of the Norse world before they seek out St Cuthbert.

Some Scandinavians would have embarked on pilgrimage to specific Insular or Continental shrines, rather than simply visiting these en route to Jerusalem or Rome. For pilgrimage of this kind the geographical location of the shrine would have been of crucial importance. The shrine of Cuthbert in Durham clearly provided a convenient destination for those living on the west coast of Norway. Evidence of this is explicit in the so-called Durham *Liber Vitae*. On folio 55v of the *Liber*

Vitae, which includes early twelfth-century entries, four Norse names are recorded: Amundr, Dagr, Grímr and Þorleifr. According to John Inslay the fact that these personal names have the singular ending *-r*, which is not common in English sources, points to pilgrims of Norwegian provenance rather than visitors from the Danelaw (Inslay 2004). Thus, although there is no trace of the cult of St Cuthbert in Norway, his shrine in Durham may have attracted Norwegian pilgrims, like the young man of Reginald's miracle, to North-East England.

*Reginald of Durham's Cuthbertine Miracle Collection:
the context of a Norwegian Miracle*²

Sally Crumplin

In a typically lengthy and convoluted miracle in Reginald of Durham's *Libellus de admirandis beati Cuthberti virtutibus*, we are told of a young Norwegian man who has been struck deaf, blind and mute on account of his misdemeanours. Following a six-year tour visiting innumerable saints shrines around the North Sea, the young man has received no relief. On his return home, his parents take him to a certain bishop to ask for advice; he suggests that they should appeal to Sts Cuthbert, Edmund and Thomas, as the former two are unsurpassed in virtue, and the latter is a new light. The parents of the Norwegian man draw lots, and this determines that they should seek the intercession of Cuthbert. The young man is immediately taken to the shrine of St Cuthbert at Durham and is of course cured, with great rejoicing (Raine 1835, ch. 112).

The Norwegian miracle, just one chapter among the 141 in Reginald's *Libellus*, is of great interest for the scholar of Norway, and its monasticism, education, wider society, traditions and overseas connections, all of which are explored by Antonsson, this volume. It is also an example of some of the key features and peculiarities of Reginald's miracle collection: it shows the popularity of St Cuthbert far from Durham, it implies the pre-eminence of his cult in the English communion of saints, and its placement in the *Libellus* has implications for the process

² I am very grateful to Haki Antonsson for bringing to my attention the significance of this miracle, and for suggesting that I provide some textual context for his detailed study of it. I would also like to thank Julie Kerr and Simon Taylor for engaging discussion about Reginald's *Libellus*. This article is written for Barbara Crawford, with great thanks for her enthusiasm for saints, and for stimulating, probably unknowingly, my interest in Cuthbert's cult in a North Sea World.

of composing miracle collections. This article provides a context for this Norwegian miracle by introducing these features of Reginald's *Libellus*, analysing in particular the construction of the text, and the themes, locations, and preoccupations of this complex, rich and diverse late-twelfth-century miracle collection.

The *Libellus* was written by Reginald, a monk of Durham, over the course of the 1160s and 1170s, a time of prosperity for Cuthbert's church and cult (Tudor 1979; Crumplin 2004). Following upheaval in the preceding four centuries, the Durham church had grown in power and stability over the course of the twelfth century, led by powerful bishops who oversaw the construction of the great cathedral and castle and accrued many riches. A vast library and active scriptorium were important features of this powerful Durham church, and St Cuthbert unsurprisingly featured prominently in this literary wealth: two rare illustrated copies of Bede's *Life of Cuthbert* were produced, one at each end of the twelfth century (Bodleian, MS University College 165; London, BL, MS Yates Thompson 26), and a number of new hagiographic works were written on Cuthbert, crowned by Reginald's large miracle collection (Marner 2000; Lawrence-Mathers 2003).

This backdrop of prosperity and stability is an important consideration, not least because it challenges the assertion that Reginald produced his *Libellus* to bolster Cuthbert's dwindling cult: a cult that was peripheral to the Angevin Empire, and whose decline was precipitated in particular by the burgeoning cult of the martyr Thomas Becket (d. 1170) (Matthew 1994, 19–21; Tudor 1989, 467). This depiction of decline comes from a rather southern-Anglo-centric perspective. It assumes that Cuthbert was an English saint, inhabiting a world which once had focused on Golden Age Northumbria, but whose political centre had long since been established in the far south of England. Here, the Norwegian miracle is instructive, and indicative of two significant themes of the *Libellus*: first, it reflects the popularity of Cuthbert's cult far from Durham; second, in the list of northern shrines visited before finally arriving with Cuthbert, it shows the geographical milieu in which Cuthbert's cult existed. Certainly, the miracle shows by its mention of Edmund and Thomas Becket that Cuthbert's cult existed within a wider communion of English saints, but Reginald was not writing a desperate defence of a cult in decline; he was writing about a saint rooted firmly and confidently in the north.

The construction of Reginald's *Libellus* reflects the popularity of Cuthbert's cult over a wide geographical area. It is generally accepted

that the miracle collection was written in two stages: the first phase (chapters 1–107) was probably completed before 1167, when its patron Aelred of Rievaulx died; the second phase (chapters 108–41) seems to have been written after 1170 as it contains several references to the new St Thomas (Crumplin 2004, 185, n. 15; 203–4). But beyond these two main stages of writing, the miracle collection appears to have been compiled from several smaller parts: groups of three or four miracles united by a common theme, person, or, usually, and most significantly, location. If miracles are concerned with Durham, they may be grouped according to the testimony of a particular individual, but many of the groups derive from a single village or monastery, often far from Durham. It seems, then, that Reginald was largely organising his collection as miracles were reported in the Durham church, and thus they became ordered by provenance of miracle or devotee.

The text does indeed yield a great deal of evidence regarding its own production, and perhaps provides more general insight into the process of compiling a miracle collection. Reginald recorded miracles in the groups in which they were reported, and three examples of this are particularly revealing: a group of five miracles from Lixtune in Cheshire, recounted in 1165 by the local priest when he travelled to Durham to give thanks (chs. 68–72); a series of six miracles reported by Aelred of Rievaulx, two of them from Kirkcudbright and three from Lothian (chs. 83–8); and chapters 108–11, three from Bellingham (near Durham) and one from Farne Island.³

The Lixtune miracles are a discrete group, beginning with a sub-heading,⁴ and ending with the statement that they were all relayed to Durham by one priest in 1165. Significantly, they are not united by a common theme: they range from a tale about a boy punished for trying to steal a crow, to a rich man cured of a disfigured face, and another cure of a boy carried to Cuthbert's church in Lixtune on a bier, and such diversity suggests that common location was the predominant motivation behind this miracle grouping. The discrete nature of this group is even clearer in the manuscript evidence of Durham Cathedral

³ The Lixtune miracles are *Libellus* chs. 68–72; the Aelred of Rievaulx group is *Libellus* chs. 83–8.

⁴ The only such subheading in the *Libellus*, it reads *Incipiunt miracula quae Beatus Cuthbertus operatus est in Coupeland*; the editor, Raine, comments that this refers to a district in the south of Cumbria, although at least three of the miracles come from Lixtune in Cheshire (Raine 1835, 138, n. 1).

Chapter MS Hunter 101, which appears to be the autograph manuscript of Reginald's *Libellus*. It was written by a single scribe, but the ductus varies considerably, and these changes coincide with the groupings of miracles.⁵ In the case of the Lixtune miracles (chs. 68–72), they begin in a ductus different to that of the preceding chapter, and are followed by a miracle concerned with Norham (on the Tweed, near Lindisfarne) in the same ductus, before there is a clear change to much smaller, neater penmanship for a group of miracles concerned with Durham itself (Durham Cathedral Chapter MS Hunter 101, 157; 174). This is just one example of the many ductus changes coinciding with geographical groupings in the autograph manuscript Hunter 101; the implication is that when Reginald recorded a group of miracles from a particular location, he was doing so as the reports came to him. By extension, it would seem that Cuthbert's cult was sufficiently active in many areas that the local community would compile (orally, or even in writing) their own Cuthbert miracles to be relayed to Durham.

The second example, of a group of miracles from Kirkcudbright and Lothian reported by Aelred of Rievaulx, sheds further light on these conclusions. Reginald tells us that he was inspired to write the *Libellus* after hearing tales of Cuthbert miracles from Aelred, perhaps referring to this particular group of miracles. Reginald certainly held Aelred in high esteem, dedicating his *Libellus* to him, but this example is more significant for showing the active role of a prominent churchman in spreading Cuthbert's cult across a wide area. Aelred of Rievaulx was a key figure in the powerful Cistercian network that extended across northern England and southern Scotland, and it seems that Durham's Church and patron saint were closely associated with this (Lawrence-Mathers 2003, 236–51; Bartlett 1999a, 81–3). Indeed, the powerful Church network may be underpinned by social and religious connections at a much lower level, demonstrated perhaps by the fact that the miracles from Kirkcudbright and Lothian all depict the feast of St Cuthbert being celebrated in these places far from Durham. Finally, this Aelred group again suggests that miracles were being collected in many locations, in Galloway, remote from Durham on the west coast of Britain, and Lothian, far closer, much of which was in fact amongst the

⁵ Further evidence that this is the autograph manuscript is in the marginal annotations, written in the same hand, which add detail such as personal names. See, for example, ch. 109.

early endowments of Cuthbert's Church, notably the area from which several other miracles in the *Libellus* come (chs. 99–101 and 136–40).

Whilst it seems that Reginald may have received these miracle stories directly from Aelred, he was not generally the initial recipient of a miracle report at Durham. Our third example is of chapters 108–11, concerned with Bellingham and, in the case of 111, with Farne Island, site of Cuthbert's seventh-century hermitage. These miracles provide further insight into the process by which the *Libellus* was constructed. Reginald explains in the *Libellus* that a special sacrist would have been the guardian of Cuthbert's shrine, and recorder of miracles there (chs. 51, 91, 125, 130). These records would then have been compiled into a miracle collection: perhaps it is to some such records that Reginald refers when he states in his preface that he became aware of Cuthbertine miracles that had not been properly written. Of course, Reginald the compiler could write these miracles with his own verbose, convoluted style, but there are notable stylistic variations in the *Libellus* which indicate that Reginald was working from the initial records of a number of different sacrists. These stylistic groupings frequently coalesce with manuscript and geographical groupings, giving further weight to the suggestion that Reginald recorded miracles in groups as they were reported from a particular location; furthermore, they imply that Reginald was influenced by the detail of these local reports, whether they were written at the location in question or by a sacrist at Durham.

To return to our example, it is stylistically inconsistent with the preceding group: chapters 106–7 are at least three printed pages of convoluted language in length, each preceded by a five- or six-line *incipit*; they are followed by chapters 108–11, which each cover approximately one page, headed by a two-line *incipit*. The marked difference between chapters 108–11 and the preceding chapters must result from the two groups being written down by two different scribes or sacrists. It seems almost certain that this writing would have occurred in Durham, as the Bellingham group (chapters 108–10) is stylistically linked with chapter 111, concerned with a Farne Island miracle which may have been reported at Durham at the same time as those from Bellingham. But these Bellingham miracles do at least provide evidence of Cuthbert miracles being collected locally, as they all derive from a certain Sproich, a poor but pious man employed by the Almoner of Durham. As with the other examples, this stylistic grouping is just one instance of a widespread phenomenon in the *Libellus*: other features that distinguish a certain group include intricate medical detail where other miracles have only a cursory and non-technical description of a cure (chs. 118–19;

cf. 113); or grammatical anomalies such as the gerundive employed in consecutive chapters 87 and 88 but used infrequently elsewhere.

Significantly, as with the Lixtune and Aelred miracles, the Bellingham group is united by a common place and/or character, rather than by type of miracle. There is, however, some thematic integrity which helps to explain the presence of the Farne miracle in this group, and perhaps the placement of the Norwegian miracle immediately after. The first Bellingham miracle concerns Sproich's daughter, who is paralysed for sewing on the feast of St Laurence then cured by Cuthbert; in the second, Sproich's cow is stolen but the thief is punished when a bolt of lightning burns his house (but not the barn and cow); and the rather slapstick third miracle tells of Walter who stole Sproich's axe and was then punished for mocking his victim when Walter and his companion were brained by the axe handle and axe head respectively. The punishment theme is continued with the Farne Island miracle, concerning a hawk that is trapped by Cuthbert for killing a tame bird belonging to the hermit Bartholomew; the Norwegian miracle which follows immediately after is certainly not stylistically compatible with the Bellingham/Farne group as it alone covers nearly as many printed pages as they do combined, but it does continue this punishment theme: the young man's deaf, blind and mute condition occurs as a malediction for imbibing. Thematic integrity can, then, influence the order in which Reginald's miracles are recorded, but it should be noted that it is entirely subordinate to the geographical groupings that form the foundation of his *Libellus*.

These three examples give some indication of the process by which this miracle collection was compiled: the stories were collected by various Cuthbert dedicatees, whether small parish churches, powerful Cistercians, or the Durham brethren, recorded in preliminary form at Durham or elsewhere, and then written up in stages by Reginald to create the *Libellus*. The three selected groups also give some insight into other features of this text, notably demonstrating that it is an eclectic selection, with miracles affecting all levels of society (including animals), and both lay and ecclesiastical, and ranging through the gamut of medieval posthumous miracle types, with punishments, a vast array of cures, and protection of buildings and Cuthbertine relics. Most importantly, these examples show that Cuthbert's cult was active far beyond its centre, representing a vibrant network of numerous small cult centres. In these cases, the geographical range encompasses Lothian, Cheshire, Galloway and of course the Durham locale including Cuthbert's hermitage at Farne, and hints at a Cistercian interest that

would cast the Cuthbertine net far further a field; taking the entire text into consideration, the cult stretches predominantly from the Tees to the Tay, from east coast to west, but radiating further from Durham and its immediate vicinity, reaching to, Furness, Lincoln, Nottinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Canterbury, and of course Norway.

How do these conclusions relate to our Norwegian miracle? Perhaps most significantly, although its placement after the Bellingham/Farne punishment miracles is thematically apt, the Norwegian miracle is a markedly singular chapter in a text composed of groups. Perhaps most obviously, the story belongs to a very different geographical milieu from most of this insular collection, its characters inhabiting a North Sea world stretching from Norway around the Scottish Islands. The chapter is also defined by a singular style: its length has been noted in contrast to the brevity of the preceding chapters, and indeed it is longer than almost any other chapter in the collection.⁶ It is also, unsurprisingly, far more detailed than most other miracles, suggesting that while it was probably first recorded in writing at Durham, the story is the result of a lengthy and perhaps rehearsed testimony from the boy's family.

But while the Norwegian miracle may stand alone, these details marry with many of the recurrent themes of Reginald's text, and it is to these that we finally turn. Cuthbert in the *Libellus* has no penchant for specific cures, but there are several cases of blindness and one of a mute monk, which connect with our deaf, blind and mute youth and represent a common ailment cured by medieval miracle; it is perhaps more notable that the latter stages of the *Libellus*, in which the Norwegian miracle appears, are dominated by cures. The maritime environment is also a feature repeated throughout the *Libellus*, perhaps not surprisingly as Cuthbert's cult was conceived on the island of Lindisfarne. There are many cases of accidental pilgrims to Lindisfarne, and to Farne Island, saved from a storm by the local saint Cuthbert, but the association of this saint with maritime miracles extends beyond this locale, as in the tale of the Cistercian abbots returning from the continent (ch. 83; cf. chs. 28–34). The importance of sea travel does explain the veneration of Cuthbert in Norway. Indeed, whilst our miracle is the only detailed reference to Norway in the *Libellus*, there are other references that

⁶ The only exception is ch. 15, comprising just over six pages, summarising the early history of Cuthbert's church.

indicate its importance to the world of Cuthbert's cult. A papal legate is caught in a storm when returning from Norway, and a crewmember of a vessel trading between England and Norway falls into a stormy sea; Cuthbert is invoked to miraculous effect on both occasions (chs. 32, 52).

The final feature is the drawing of lots. This appears on two other occasions in Reginald's *Libellus*: one of them is early in the collection, when the trio of saints pitted against each other is Cuthbert, Edmund and Aetheldreda; the other, as in the Norwegian miracle, replaces Aetheldreda with the recently martyred Thomas of Canterbury. Significantly, this *topos* is echoed in the *Orkneyinga Saga*, in which a lottery decides the votive act to be undertaken (Pálsson and Edwards 1981, ch. 57). The drawing of lots, then, seems a fitting point with which to conclude: it demonstrates the connection of Cuthbert's cult and world with Scandinavian tradition, it emphasises the English saintly world to which the cult also belongs, and most importantly it communicates the confidence in Cuthbert's cult which underpins the *Libellus*.

It is this confidence that determines the nature of the *Libellus*, stimulating the production of such a wide-ranging and often eclectic text. Reginald's collection of Cuthbert miracles is a rich hagiographic source, providing a diverse range of miracles, and yielding tantalising evidence regarding the production of miracle collections. Most importantly here, the *Libellus* reflects the wide dissemination of Cuthbert's cult, showing not simply that Cuthbert was revered far and wide, but also illustrating that communications were strong throughout Britain and across the seas, whether for trade, ecclesiastical business, pilgrimage, or to extol the virtues of a particular saint.

Appendix

*Concerning a certain Norwegian clerk, who was mute, deaf and blind,
and would wretchedly and tirelessly toss his head about; the manner in
which he was cured*⁷

by

Aidan Conti

From generation to generation, as the Lord eternally⁸ governs the various changes of season, the same power and clemency of God has always existed in Saint Cuthbert; which has shone for those near and far in the sufficiently wondrous and manifold virtue of mercies and miracles. Indeed, we know so many examples of his works of piety that we are overwhelmed more by their number than by their wonder. From amongst these, there emerged one astounding new miracle of remarkable wonder; before our very eyes this new power of grace renewed for us the ancient miracles of our father, the Blessed Cuthbert.

In the land of the Norwegians, there was a certain youth of an exceedingly excellent nature, born from the noble lineage of his parents, who were inhabitants of that land. His family very often stayed in his native city of Bergen,⁹ because that city was very civilized and well-frequented, as the best men of the country and farmers from other regions came there to meet. His father [by the name of Þórólfr]¹⁰ was a chief priest¹¹ among the Norwegian prelates, for the nobility of his blood and the fertile abundance of his riches granted this to him by natural right of law. He therefore decided that his most beloved son was to be educated in the urbane manners of great men and in the refinements of their speech. He entrusted the boy to King Ingi, and assigned him to be instructed by the royal ministers. There, after six years had passed, he had been shaped by the examples of much teaching; for

⁷ I offer my sincere thanks to Åslaug Ommundsen, Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Bergen, for her meticulous reading of this translation which corrected many errors in the interpretation of the Latin and made many improvements to the English. I thank also Simon Taylor for further suggestions and emendations, including the identifications of the places mentioned in the text. Responsibility for the remaining errors and infelicities is entirely my own.

⁸ Read *intemporaliter*, meaning outside time rather than *intemperaliter*, intemperately, of the edition (p. 248).

⁹ *paterna conversatio in genitali solo crebrior in civitate Berhensi existit.*

¹⁰ *Thuroldf nomine* added in the margin of the manuscript.

¹¹ *sacerdos inter Norwagienses praelatos praecipuus.*

there he learned the good sense of the ministers and transformed the rough crudeness of his mother tongue into the fluency and beauty of the Roman tongue. But, because at that time his more mature age was more capable of greater knowledge, his father entrusted him, once the boy had been removed from the royal officials, to a certain teacher to be trained in literary studies for five years. Quickly he learned the rudiments of instruction in many things; for the acumen of his sharp intellect and the agility of his refined mind showed themselves to be smoothly polished and rapidly cultivated. After he was sustained by the nurturing of this teaching for a short time, he was handed over to be instructed in the more mature practices of the monks in the monastery at Stavanger.¹² Certainly, instruction in diverse tuition, ever more prudent and ever more wise, is the sweetness of learning. For when one's character imbues itself in the many undertakings of the intellect, it more easily grows accustomed to the most excellent commitments of studies.

After five years had passed in these rudiments, he was committed again to another highly literate teacher so that in his more advanced age he might be regarded as more perfect in secular knowledge. Whereas youthful age, a friend to jokes and accustomed to drink and food, is foolish and more inclined to levity, this youth, so that the favour of his teacher might be greater towards him, punctiliously obeyed the teacher in all matters. And to whatever place he pleased, on whatever business, the student was in the habit of accompanying the teacher. So on one particular day he took his teacher with him to the wine-tavern, where both indulged for a long time in drawn-out indiscretions of drink in a foolish drinking-contest of tradesmen more than was good or usual (for them).¹³

At last, after the long hours of the darkness of the night had been spent in such an endeavour, his fleshly brother, taking pity on his youthful errors, began persuasively to induce his brother with many admonitions, and to convince him to come home with him, now with threats of his parents, now with many and various words of reproach. And with difficulty at last he persuaded his brother to return with him to the family home. And because the desiccating drink of wine had entirely subjugated the weak forces of his body, the young man wept,

¹² *monachorum maturioribus institutis in cœnobio Steingravensi, traditur informandus.*

¹³ *ubi uterque magis expedito vel solito cauponum certamine infrunito, potuum prolixioribus temeritatibus diutius indulsit.*

feeling the appetite of hunger rather than the whirlpool of drunkenness. After a little food had been brought, namely bread and butter, he, who believed himself insatiable with respect to most foods, consumed scarcely three morsels.

At last after the beds had been set out in the usual manner he lay down to sleep, and that night, as well as the following day and the next night, he lay oppressed so much by the fatal onset of sleep that although many people were twisting him in different directions often and frequently, he was not able to be woken. On the following day, once the sleep had been driven away, he sat up. But his head like the leaf of a tree blown by the wind did not stop shaking continuously back and forth.¹⁴ Finally, with everyone marvelling and zealously investigating the cause of such an onset, he began to declare that a certain woman blacker than soot had appeared to him in his dreams. She had violently twisted the head of the sleeper with furious hands, and bent the front of the head to the back of the neck with a twist, and with her hand of unnatural strength she struck more serious blows to various parts of the body successively, and executed the same evil work both to the top of the head as well as to the front and back.¹⁵ And as she went away she warned him that all his life he would never cease to be driven by such madness, nor would he ever stop his head from moving restlessly, but rather he would toss it back and forth quickly and tirelessly.

As he spoke, he moved all the listeners or on-lookers to tearful laments because, on account of his innate good sense and grace, he appeared loveable to all. And the more refined in the eyes of every one of his friends had been his amiability and the graceful excellence of his manners previously, the more severe was their desolate grief. Meanwhile, the parents filled with sadness and dismayed by grief, enclosed the weak man for the entire year in the refuge of their lodging, and they did not at any time allow him to go out in public. Finally from the excessive restlessness of his head and the frequent misfortune of the shaking, after a full month he lost the pleasure of hearing, and at last in the course of the year he lost all the keenness of sight along with the clarity of his eyes. For all the inner parts of his neck were being rolled around in tireless motions, and, through the pernicious insolence of

¹⁴ *sed capud instar folii arboris vento agitati, sine aliqua morae intercapedine interfluente, semper hac et illac jactare non desiit.*

¹⁵ *tam in verticis superficie, quam in frontis seu occipitis regione.*

the illness, all the pathways or entries of his senses were confused and pressed together within him. Thereafter, from the unhealthy movement of the neck joint, a pain issuing from above in the little chambers of the brain invaded little by little the interior arteries and veins of the lower throat. After the year had passed, his whole throat began to swell up with a horrible redness and serious pain and to deprive him of all faculty of voice and speech.

So he lived deaf, blind and mute, his head tirelessly tossing from side to side. Finally, after all medicinal actions had been earnestly applied, he experienced more the burden of physical discomfort than any relief of a cure. Indeed, his eyes appeared to revolve continuously in his head, like the very swift turning of chariot wheels. After this he was in no way able to put food into his mouth, nor to apply the refreshment of a drop of drink to his trembling lips. For he was never able to control his violently tossing and turning head in any consolation of relief. For this reason a new method was devised by his carers:¹⁶ with his head grasped in both hands, they held it very firmly with all their strength, and so put food and victuals¹⁷ into the mouth of the infirm man. They used to do this frequently until they thought that he had swallowed entirely the bits that he had chewed.

If he had had only one assistant¹⁸ to help him, by no skill would this assistant have been able to give him food unless he had first stretched him on his back or on his side, and thus with his head lowered to the ground, he would insert the sustaining food into the mouth of the gaping man. Indeed, had the attendant attempted to give him something to drink while one temple was pressed to the ground, he would have had to press the other very firmly with his foot or hand until some of the liquid had gone down the passage of the infirm man's throat.

It was quite an amazing and mournful spectacle to see in one man so many abominable and dangerous kinds of miseries. Finally, if you were to put a morsel in his hand, you would have been able to see him press it now to his nostrils, at other times to his eyes, sometimes under his chin, and often enough to his face. For the entrance to his mouth was not able to open in co-ordination with his desire or effort, because the disordered movement of his head always caused his lips

¹⁶ *custodes*.

¹⁷ *cibos et victualia*.

¹⁸ *ministrum*.

to be in unanticipated places.¹⁹ Consequently, although all hope of his health (returning) appeared dead to everyone, because not even in his dreams did the tossing of his head to and fro seem to cease, his parents conceived of a very beneficial plan. They directed the sick man to each and every place consecrated through the virtues of the saints, and committed him to the charge and custody of his brother, a cleric [called Scheleir].²⁰ For six years, he led his brother, who suffered in an excessively sick state, around innumerable places and tombs of God's saints. But never in distant lands or in far off borders was he able to find the remedies of desired health.²¹ Finally, he went to Denmark,²² Iceland,²³ Frisia,²⁴ and all the contiguous fjords of Norway along with lands which cannot be enumerated here,²⁵ but not one of the indigenous saints chose to offer any assistance, comfort or relief to him. Assuredly all those saints saved such an immense task for the virtues and strength of the powerful St Cuthbert, possibly because when he was in their stewardship²⁶ they knew themselves unequal to and incapable of the clemency of Cuthbert's piety.

Finally, forsaken by all the remedies of the saints he was led back to his hereditary borders. His parents took him to a certain bishop, who had been made an anchorite for a year after the martyrdom of St Thomas, and they received the following advice from him: 'I have travelled far and wide,²⁷ but never have I found any saint more powerful in virtue or more outstanding in work than St Cuthbert, a bishop of the English, and St Edmund. And because St Thomas is recently reckoned to shine among them as a new light, each one of these should be appointed one of three lots. Therefore the lot of whichever

¹⁹ *eo quod flexus turbidus semper ora per incertitudinis loca variata diduxit*. For *diduxit* read *deduxit*.

²⁰ *Scheleir dicti* added in the margin.

²¹ In the margin in a contemporary hand is: *Daciam* [Denmark], *Schoithlandam* [? Scotland], *Ysyam* [? Iceland], *Guthlandam* [Gotland], *Grenelandam*, *quam dicimus viridem terram* [Greenland, which we call the green land] *Yūiste* [Uist], *Leothus* [Lewis], *Barreiam* [Barra], *Cole* [Coll], *Tirieth* [Tiree], *Coluense* [Colinsay], *Achum* [? Rum], *Slete* [Sleat], *Bote* [Bute], *Schy* [Skye], *Hyle* [Islay], *Hii Colmekille* [Iona], *Mulih* [Mull], *insulas Orcadum* [Orkney Islands], *Catenesse* [Caithness], *Scotiam* [Scotland north of the Forth].

²² The form *Daciem* implies nominative *Dacies*; the commonest form is *Dacia* as in the marginal note quoted above.

²³ *Ysiam* is probably Iceland; see also the marginal note above.

²⁴ *Frigiam*.

²⁵ *sinus marinos Norvagiæ contiguos cum terris hic innumerandis*.

²⁶ *dispensationis tenore*.

²⁷ *Plures... terrarum anfractus circumivi*.

saint comes up three times after the third cast, by the merits of that very saint the Lord has ensured that this sick man will be restored to health'.²⁸ Amazingly, the lot cast third was always that of Cuthbert, and this determined that the sick man be delivered to health by his patronage.

After the prophecies of the lot-casting, the father diligently brooked no delays. And paying copious expenses along the way, he hastily sent his son along with the aforementioned brother to the borders of the English. While traversing Scotland,²⁹ they ran into brigands with half-naked rumps, from whom, after being beaten up and robbed of all they had, they barely escaped with their lives.³⁰ Finally, coming to Durham, they stopped at the hospital which is situated outside the city walls. As the next day dawned, they arrived at the tomb of the Blessed Cuthbert. One of them, the brother who had remained healthy, clearly explained the entire course of the aforesaid malady to the guardian of the tomb.³¹ After these things had been related in order among the crowd of brothers, prayers were specially prepared,³² and each man began to press on ardently with devout prayers and to implore anxiously the frequently proven tender compassion³³ of St Cuthbert on behalf of the aforementioned invalid. He did not ignore the prayers of the petitioners, nor did he fail the faith and necessity of others, nor did he flee to be absent from the compassionate fraternal love.

Indeed on the following day, when he went out for some errand just within the bounds of the church, he wiped his eyes and suddenly saw below him piled heaps of sand³⁴ and the rims and spokes of mill-wheels turning in the current of the river. At first he thought these were the heads of men, for the novelty of amazement, as it were, created images of fancy in a kind of vision. Finally, as he raised his eyes, dazzled by the unaccustomed brightness, beyond the bank of the valley and river,

²⁸ *Cujuscunque igitur sors tercio jactata ter ad superiora conscenderit, ipsius sancti meritis hunc aegrotum saluti restituendum Dominus conservavit.*

²⁹ *Scociam* i.e. Scotland north of the Forth.

³⁰ *vix semineces evaserunt.*

³¹ *custodi ipsius sepulcri.*

³² *orationibus peculiariis institutis.*

³³ The phrase *viscera misericordiae* evokes Luke 1.78 and 1 Col 3.12. The Douai-Rheims translation, which is standardly employed to render the Vulgate, translates literally as the bowels of mercy, which is unlikely to produce the intended resonance for modern readers. Consequently, I have employed the Revised English Bible translation to invoke the meaning of the Vulgate if not its literal words.

³⁴ *congestas harenarum aggeres*; presumably sand-banks in the River Wear.

he saw very clearly the tiled roofs of white-washed houses³⁵ and by looking at them carefully he made them out for what they were.³⁶

After being led back to the church, he decided to spend the whole of that night without sleep. For more joyful with hope, he now sensed that St Cuthbert was more inclined towards the gift of a miracle for him. So with his mat laid out under the uncorrupted body of the glorious pontiff, he placed all the joints of his manifold desolation under that man for quite a long time. Then tired from the exertion, he went forward to approach, embrace and kiss the soles of the feet of the tomb high up on the outside,³⁷ and with copiously flowing tears he invoked the mercy of the Blessed Cuthbert not with words, but inwardly with his heart. And behold! That most glorious man, confessor of the Lord, Cuthbert, clothed entirely in white, solemnly crowned with his mitre and supported by his pastoral staff, appeared and in words composed with Roman eloquence he attentively inquired: 'Why, I say, have you wandered for so long, and not requested the mercy of St Cuthbert?' And with the tip of his staff he pierced through the middle of the whole brain-pan from the right ear to the left, and so the episcopal figure receded and disappeared. Then in a voice of horror the wretched man issued the following words, saying with plaintive sobs: 'Now, brother, men plunder me and try to snatch away my things!' And running up, his brother restrained the sounds of the ominously muttering man, and with his body sharply dashed him prostrate onto the steps of the paving slabs.³⁸ For he feared that his shrill sound would be distressing to the sleeping brothers, or might disturb the prayers of one of the guardians of the holy body. Soon afterwards, overcome by sleep, the invalid saw the same pontiff standing by him, and for a third time embracing his whole head on all four sides he said: 'Do not behave like this any more, but take care to invoke God and St Cuthbert immediately for your relief.'³⁹ Do not twist or toss your head any more, but rather from now on take care that with your head raised high you walk more properly'.

Soon afterwards, having said these things, he disappeared. And as the sick man awoke, he said, 'St Cuthbert, have mercy on me'. When the brothers heard this, just as nocturns were finishing, they rushed

³⁵ *laquearia candidatarum domorum.*

³⁶ *et discernendo cognovit.*

³⁷ *ad pedum sepulchri subeunda, amplexanda et deosculanda vestigia foris altius prodiit.*

³⁸ *pavimentorum gradibus.*

³⁹ *sed procurato Deum et Sanctum Cuthbertum ad tui solatia instantius invocare. Procurato* is the second or future imperative singular, and is used also in the next sentence.

up and saw this man who on the previous day had been nearly mad, senseless, half alive, blind and dumb, with neither beauty nor grace, and now they looked upon a most healthy man, flush and sensible, who was able to see and hear, as well as hold and extend his head in a naturally upright manner. How great then their gasps, what floods of sweet tears which the great multitude of joy shed, frequently proclaiming, 'St Cuthbert, most holy father, we give you praise and thanks! Have mercy on us! Gracious one, have mercy!' Then the choir of bystanders sang as loudly as possible *Te Deum laudamus* and glorified God in St Cuthbert more through the sweetness of their tears than the modulation of their voices.

And after the bells⁴⁰ had been rung, they sang out individually for a long time to the Lord and proclaimed the great deeds of God. Indeed, when morning came, after the congregation of the community had gathered, God's miracles were proclaimed and everything was recounted in the presence of the young man who stood before them. But because the sick man was not yet able to speak, for a while a pervading inner sorrow saddened everyone's spirits. So on the following night he went back again to the feet of the Blessed Cuthbert, and going round them with devoted kisses he suddenly fell asleep. And behold the Blessed Cuthbert appeared for a third time, and with a boundless pleasant sweetness preceding him, he stood by the young man and persuasively consoled him. The bishop said to him: 'Why do you stay like this? Why do you not implore the mercy of St Cuthbert by shouting with voice and words?' Immediately the young man was roused and, waking up, proclaimed the following loudly with voice and words: 'St Cuthbert, gracious one, have mercy on me!' And soon thereafter he sensed that he had recovered his fluent⁴¹ tongue and very ready speech, and afterwards in his own tongue he narrated all these things to us.⁴²

Truly in this was a transformation⁴³ of God's right hand which established that the power and mercy of St Cuthbert should be declared in our times to those far and near. Thus he ordained that the saddened

⁴⁰ For *signis* as a spelling for *cynnis*, see R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources With Supplement* (London, 1980), s.v. *signum*.

⁴¹ For *disertum* read *disertam* (p. 253).

⁴² *et haec omnia nobis postmodum ipse lingua propria enarravit*. If *lingua propria* means in his own tongue or language, the implication is that the young man at this point spoke a form of Old Norse. However, this may simply be a literary topos. It may also be translated with his own tongue, emphasising his recovered ability to speak, with the language unspecified.

⁴³ *immutatio*

hearts of his people were to be gladdened by new joys, when he dispensed perfect health, so that a faith more firmly strengthened should not become tepid. And so on the solemn day of the Finding of the Holy Cross,⁴⁴ as people gathered together, the man, clothed in a cope in the choir of the church with the cantor himself before the steps, sang *Kyrie eleyson* in celebratory manner. And afterwards he was led out in front of the people, and in Latin,⁴⁵ which he had formerly learned, he told the entire story of his illness and cure. But⁴⁶ about his visits to different lands, about the places of the saints, and about the casting of lots he remembered nothing at all, because for six years he was able to feel nothing but the pain of his internal illness. These things happened in the 1,172nd year from the incarnation of our Lord, Sunday night, 30 April, after seven full years had been spent in this illness together with.⁴⁷

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⁴⁴ 3 May.

⁴⁵ *lingua Romana*.

⁴⁶ *Nam* for; but the sense requires but.

⁴⁷ The last line has been cropped; see Raine 1835, 254. From London, British Library, Harley 4383, Raine adds *diebus sedecim* sixteen days (*ibid.* 326).

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IRISH AND ARMENIAN ECCLESIASTICS IN MEDIEVAL ICELAND

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During the spring of 2005 it was my privilege to spend a few days as a guest at the Strathmartine Institute, over which Barbara Crawford presides. It came as a shock to realize that almost thirty years had passed since I spent a year at the University of St. Andrews and attended her seminar on Medieval Scandinavian History. I was particularly lucky to be able to take part in that course, because at the time there probably was no such course in the US—certainly not at the august institution where I subsequently did my graduate work. This brief paper cannot reflect the thanks due to one to whom I owe such an important scholarly debt.

Two of the most tantalizing passages in Ari Þorgilsson's *Book of the Icelanders*, composed between 1122 and 1133, concern the possible visits of foreign ecclesiastics to the island. At the time of the Scandinavian settlement, we are told: "there were Christians here, who the Norwegians call *papar*, but they went away because they didn't want to be here with heathens, and left behind them Irish books and bells and croziers; from this it might be understood that they were Irish".¹ In a later passage, Ari mentions foreign bishops who had, at one time or another, come to Iceland. They include Jóhan the Irishman and "another five who claimed to be bishops: Örnolfr and Goðiskolkr and three Armenians, Peter and Abraham and Stephanus".² The author of *Hungrvaka*, who wrote some eighty years after Ari and was familiar with his work, appears to refer to the same group when he mentions the presence of bishops who arrived "from other countries" and were much less demanding than Bishop Ísleifr Gizurarson (1056–1080): "they

¹ "Þá váru hér menn kristnir, þeir es Norðmenn kalla papa, en þeir fóru síðan á braut, af því at þeir vildu eigi vesa hér við heiðna menn, ok létu eptir bœkr írskar og bjöllur ok bagla; af því mátti skilja, at þeir váru menn írskir." Ari Þorgilsson, *Íslendingabók*, in *Íslendingabók—Landnámabók* 5. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

² "En kvómu hér aðrir fimm, þeir es byskupar kváðusk vesa: Örnolfr og Goðiskolkr ok þrír ermskir: Petrus ok Abrahám ok Stephánus." *Ibid.* 18.

were therefore popular with evil people, until Archbishop Adalbert [of Hamburg-Bremen, 1043–1072] sent a letter to Iceland and forbade people to receive any services from them, saying that some of them were excommunicate, and that all had travelled in spite of his prohibition”.³ It is my aim to discuss the nature of the evidence for the possible presence of Irish and Armenians in the centuries before and after the millennium; in both cases the evidence is archaeological, and in neither case has it survived in Iceland.

Regarding the first quote, I shall not be concerned with the identity of the *papar*, a topic ably addressed by the “Papar project” led by the recipient of this volume. The presence in Iceland of Irish ecclesiastical objects is a related, but separate, question; indeed, in Ari’s presentation, it is the key to the identification of the *papar*—a term which he attributes to Norwegians. Rather, I am interested in the possible evidence that Christians of Irish origin (*papar* or others) had reached Iceland and departed at the coming of the Vikings. Since Ari makes no claim to have seen the evidence himself, we cannot know for certain on what basis its identity as “Irish” was evaluated. “Bells, books and croziers” are of course objects typically associated with Irish clerics and, more specifically, saints. Already in the second half of the twelfth century, Gerald of Wales noted that “the people and clergy of both Wales and Ireland have a great reverence for bells that can be carried about, and staffs belonging to the saints, and made of gold and silver, or bronze, and curved at their upper ends” (Gerald of Wales 1982, 116). The importance of these objects is attested not only by the reliquaries which were designed to encase individual exemplars said to have belonged to holy individuals (Ó’Floinn 1994; Harbison 1999, 261–64, 271–274 and plates 176–180) but also from images of ecclesiastical figures on metalwork and stone pillars (Bourke 1980, 58; Harbison 1991, 219–20), which have been interpreted as representing saints or clerics.

Ari’s statement concerning the departure of pre-Scandinavian Irish Christians has often been called into question on the grounds that if the Christians had departed because they did not want to share the country with heathens, they would not have left valued religious objects

³ “urðu þeir því vinsælir við vonða menn, þar til at Aðalbertus erkibiskup sendi bréf til Íslands og bannaði mönnum alla þjónustu af þeim at þiggja, ok kvað þá suma vera bannsetta, en alla í óleyfi sínu farit hafa.” *Hungvaka*, 1858, 62–63.

behind; this argument is supported by the fact that in the mid-ninth century the Codex Aureus was ransomed by an Anglo-Saxon ealdorman and his wife because they “were not willing that these holy books should remain any longer in heathen hands.” (quoted in Keynes 1997 62, caption to plate on facing page; cf. *The Stowe Missal* xlix). Likewise Donnchadh Ó’Corráin considers it probable that “the Vikings soon learned that [precious vessels and shrines] fetched more ransom than their crude worth in precious metal” (Ó’Corráin 1997, 96). Nonetheless, large amounts of Irish material ended up in Norway as loot, while one object tentatively identified as a crozier head travelled as far as Helgö, Sweden (Youngs, 1989 plate 147 p. 152). These finds should serve as a warning against assuming that Irish objects necessarily accompanied individuals of Irish origin.

While “loot” is the most common explanation for the presence in Iceland of the items mentioned by Ari, there are other possibilities. One is that the items had not been abandoned, but buried. Rather than imagining prestigious books like the Codex Aureus or the Book of Kells, which might have been encased in valuable reliquaries, we should consider another type of book that was distinctively Irish: tiny pocket-gospels in miniscule script, often featuring evangelist portraits at the beginning of each (McGurk 1956; Harbison 1999, 88–99). These were produced in Ireland and centres of Irish culture c. 750–850, but are not known from any other part of Europe. Although the story of St. Columba’s acquisition of such a gospel, said to have been from the grave of St. Martin, is undoubtedly apocryphal (McGurk 1956, 250, quoting the Book of Lismore, 175), this literary example might reflect, or might have influenced, local practice. In fact such items, particularly the Gospel of St. John, appear to have been placed in coffins as a protective amulet; most famous is the Stonyhurst gospel, found in the coffin of St. Cuthbert in 1104 (Brown 1969, 36–43). Irish hand-bells have been found in Anglo-Saxon tombs (Barry Ager, personal communication; Hinton 2000, 44–47). In an Icelandic context, Bishop Páll Jónsson’s sarcophagus contained his crozier along with his bones. Given the common practice of burying clerics in their vestments, the presence of bells, books, or croziers in clerical graves would not be surprising. We should recall that the Icelandic word *bagall* is probably derived from Irish *bachall*.

It is also worth considering whether such items might have been brought by Christian settlers, whether of Gaelic or Scandinavian origin,

or by subsequent trade. When the famous reliquary casket owned by Rannveig arrived in Denmark from a Norwegian church in 1845, it contained purported relics of the Holy Cross and St. Paul (Blindheim 1987, 203). Admittedly, the identifying documents are from dates significantly after the Viking period (late medieval and seventeenth century, respectively) but it is not completely beyond the realm of possibility that the relics themselves are older; in any event, it appears that the original function of the casket was known. Such knowledge is unlikely to derive from antiquarianism, and suggests a continuous ecclesiastical context for the casket. The Icelandic bells, books, and croziers might conceivably themselves have been relics—whether this fact was remembered or not. Extant examples have often survived in Ireland precisely because of their supernatural status, which caused them to be encased in reliquaries as sumptuous as Rannveig's. Such items could have been brought to Iceland by early Christians at any time before or after the settlement period; nor should we forget the presence of the Irish bishop, Jóhan, who preached in Iceland with the blessing of Archbishop Adalbert of Hamburg-Bremen. Ecclesiastical objects of Irish provenance could also have reached Iceland via the Hebrides or Orkney Islands.

The only other literary references to such objects are as tantalizing as Ari's. *Landnámabók* relates that a man called Örlygr was given, on his departure from Ireland, consecrated soil, an iron bell, and a *plenarium* (gospel text) for use in the church that he would build on arrival (*Íslendingabók-Landnámabók*, 52–53). The giver is “the holy Bishop Patrick” said to be from the Hebrides. *Hauksbók* makes the iron bell serve the miraculous function of indicating where the immigrants should settle; after accidentally falling overboard, it is discovered on shore when they land (*ibid.* 55. *Hauksbók* adds to the other items a gold coin).

A work that contains some material similar to that in *Landnámabók*—but is otherwise pure fiction—claims that the bell and book survived at the church at Esja until the thirteenth century; the former was badly rusted, and we are told that Bishop Árni Þorláksson [1269–98] took the *plenarium*, which was written in “Irish script”, to Skálholt where it was repaired (*Kjalnesinga saga*, 43–44). This text also gives Örlygr pure Irish ancestry, and it has been argued convincingly by Robert Cook (1994) that its main theme is conflict between families of Irish and Norwegian origin. An author who transformed Örlygr from a Hebridean to an Irishman might well have invented a book with Irish script to give authenticity to his narrative. Rather than having seen the volume in Skálholt, as proposed by Cook, he could have recounted

its removal by Bishop Árni to explain why it was not to be seen at Esjuberg. While an iron bell does reflect the oldest type of Irish hand-bells, produced through the ninth century (Bourke, 1980), we are again faced with the fact that we have no idea what the bell looked like or how or when it arrived. The same can be said of the book with Irish script. Assuming it actually existed, we can imagine a desire to give it a history as venerable as possible. I am put in mind of the medieval chalice at Breiðabólstaður, said to be the gift of elves; in some ways, Irish Christian settlers are no less romantic than elves as original owners of valuable objects. Unfortunately, no medieval documentation from the church at Esja has survived. A single Irish crozier is, in fact, attested in Iceland: a “bagall írskur” is included in an inventory for the episcopal see at Hólar from 1569 (*Diplomatarium Islandicum*, 15, 114). By this time, however, there had been English bishops at both Icelandic dioceses, and the scattered Irish objects recorded in church inventories are unlikely to be six centuries old.⁴

Turning to Ari's second passage, “Armenians” can be more securely located within our texts. They have left traces not only in narrative sources, but also in the Christian laws' section of *Grágás*, composed at about the same time as Ari wrote:

If bishops or priests come to this country who are not versed in the Latin language, whether they are “Armenian” or Russian, it is lawful for people to hear their services if they wish. But they are not to be paid for services and no priestly office is to be accepted from them. . . . Churches are to be consecrated and children confirmed as if nothing of the kind had previously been done when the rites were performed by men not versed in the Latin language (*Laws of Early Iceland* I, 38).

The Armenian (Icelandic *ermiskir*) bishops were first identified as heretical Paulicians by A. D. Jørgensen in the nineteenth century (Jørgensen 1884–88, 684), and this identification was generally accepted until 1960, when Magnús Már Lárusson rejected it and suggested that the bishops were not from Armenia, but rather from Ermland on the Baltic coast,

⁴ A thorough study of objects in church inventories identified as foreign is much to be desired. Lilli Gjerløw has collected examples of “Irish” liturgical books found in Iceland; she points out “in the Late Middle Ages, ‘Irish’ could also apply to books written in Latin hand on the English fringe of Ireland, where English Benedictine and Austin canons settled in the twelfth century and where the rite of Sarum was widely accepted.” *Liturgica Islandica* I p. 20.

where they presumably represented an offshoot of Russian missionary activity. This interpretation was preferred by the translators of *Grágás*. The primary objection to the Ermland theory is the lack of evidence that the Baltic lands were anything but stubbornly pagan until well into the twelfth century (cf. Fletcher 1997, 417–450).

In fact, although scholarship has been unwilling to accept the possibility that there could actually have been Armenians in Iceland during the episcopate of Ísleifr Gizurarson (1056–1080), this notion is not so farfetched as it may appear. Armenia was subject to periodic invasion, and had been devastated by Turkish attacks in the middle of the eleventh century: it would hardly be surprising to find Armenian clerics fleeing westward from these incursions. Several from the early eleventh century have been identified by Gérard Dédéyan (1979) from the pages of the *Acta Sanctorum*.

Of more interest in the present context is the recent excavation of the convent church of the Holy Cross at Niedernburg, Passau. The discovery of a stone grave-chamber under the floor of the nave in front of the altar of the Holy Cross revealed a powerful man of about 45 years of age. He had been buried in ecclesiastical vestments, and lead tablets on the breast of the skeleton were inscribed with a Latin text identifying him as an Armenian who had arrived in Bavaria with a number of compatriots (Christlein 1980). This find vindicates a local account of an Armenian archbishop who was said to have been buried in the convent, although the precise time and place were unknown. The unknown archbishop has now been identified with *sancti Gregorii, Armeniorum quondam ut ferunt archiepiscopi* the teacher of St. Engilmar (d. 1100); Gregory's presence in Passau is attributed to the pious goal of pilgrimage. This information is from the Windberger Annals, which also tell us that he died on 23 September during a solar eclipse which took place around noon (Kolmer 1986, 14).⁵ As it turns out, there was a solar eclipse in Bavaria c. 11 am on that date in 1093. The event fits nicely with the dating of the excavation itself and with the practice of depositing lead tablets in the graves of prominent men. It is interesting to note that the German chronicler was as uncertain about the episcopal status of the Armenian ecclesiastic as was Ari.

⁵ *Historiae et Annales Windbergenses*, ed. Philipp Jaffé MGH SS 17, Hannover 1861, 561, cited in Lothar Kolmer, "Die Inschriften aus dem Grab des Bischofs Gregorius und die Herkunft der Baiern aus Armenien," *Ostbairische Grenzmarken; Passauer Jahrbuch für Geschichte, Kunst und Volkskunde* 1986, 14.

I doubt that Gregory himself got so far as Iceland, but his compatriots could have: the fact that archbishop Adalbert had excommunicated some of the group suggests that they were known to him and had arrived via Germany. Indeed, the companions of the Armenians bear German names rather than Slavic ones. At any rate, Gregory's grave provides concrete evidence that Armenians had reached southern Germany in the second half of the eleventh century. From Passau it would easily be possible to join the pilgrim route that ended in Iceland.

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⁶ So far only the burial catalogue has been published. The bells are shown in figs. 5.71, 4 and 5.90, 1. Discussion will be forthcoming in vol. 2.

⁷ The reliquary is No. 9084 in the National Museum, Copenhagen.

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⁸ The crozier head is item nr. Z59075–1000 in Statens Historiska Museum, Stockholm.

MEDIEVAL PARISH FORMATION IN ORKNEY

Sarah Jane Gibbon

This paper will consider the formation of ecclesiastical parishes in Orkney in the high Middle Ages. The discussion is based on a consideration of settlement patterns, and looks at how they can inform on the creation of parishes and the reorganisation of the landscape. From this analysis it would seem that the parishes originate in the twelfth century as a consequence of a combined process of ecclesiastical and secular centralisation.

Settlement in medieval Orkney, much discussed over the years, has been of particular interest to influential antiquarians and historians such as, J. S. Clouston, H. Marwick, W. P. L. Thomson and B. Crawford, not to mention those who have been involved in excavation and interpretation of individual medieval sites (for example, Batey 2003; Buteaux 1997; Hunter 1986; Hunter and Dockrill 1982; Kaland 1993; Lowe 1998, 2002; Marwick J. 1984a, 1984b; Marwick H. 1952; Morris 1989, 1996; Owen 1993; Radford 1959). These previous settlement discussions have focused primarily on the secular landscape and in particular on identifying links between Scandinavia and Orkney, usually through a combination of place-name analysis, archaeology and written sources (Clouston 1932, Crawford 1987, Marwick 1952, Morris 1989, 1996; Owen 1993). Ecclesiastical studies have been more limited, with Craven and Clouston providing the main contributions at the turn of the twentieth century and Andersen, Cant, Crawford, Morris and Radford in the last sixty years. It is as a result of a combination of these settlement and ecclesiastical studies that we know the significance of the bishopric, have an insight into religious sites across the archipelago, understand the varying types of living and working practices, appreciate the complexity of society, recognise some of the many influences on the islands and can visualise the ways the people lived, worked the land and sea, died and were buried.

However, the ability to visualise medieval Orkney also owes much to the *Orkneyinga Saga*. This wonderful account of the earls of Orkney, written *c.* 1200 in Iceland, is more than a history of individuals as it contains within its pages numerous anecdotes which shed light on

Orkney society in the twelfth century, regarding settlements, institutions and events. Of course, such a source has the same problems as any medieval text: it is not a narrative history; its aim is not to record an account of medieval Orkney but to honour the earls who deserve glorification. However, the twelfth century accounts are written only a short time after the described events occurred, and there is no glory in fictionalising events that the audience know to be untrue. The inherent political and religious biases do not lessen the quality of the saga as an informative source. It is only because of the saga that we can directly relate settlements to known individuals, that we know the importance of particular areas to the earls and bishops and learn about the ruling elite. But the saga is a double-edged sword: it is because of the allure of the *Orkneyinga Saga* that so much has been written about medieval Orkney, but it is also the basis for some misconstrued interpretations, which rely too heavily on what the saga tells the reader (Marwick 1935, Johnston 1903a and 1903b).

There have previously been only two thorough analyses of the development of the medieval church in Orkney and the formation of the parishes (Clouston 1918a, 1918b, 1932 and Cant 1975, 1984). Of these, the most detailed accounts were Clouston's. Clouston, a remarkably talented antiquarian, spent many years, at the turn of the twentieth century, gathering information on chapels and churches (locally named such) throughout Orkney, as well as studying various aspects of medieval society, using mainly documentary, but also some archaeological, evidence. He published two informative articles on the chapels of Orkney in *Scottish Historical Review* in 1918, and in 1932 a summary of his chapel studies was published in *A History of Orkney*. In this book his conclusion on the ecclesiastical development of the islands was that a form of pre-parochial church organisation based on privately owned 'ursland' chapels, was later replaced by the parish kirks and the parochial system proper (Clouston 1932, 143–5). He used Crosskirk in Westray as proof of this, showing that the small chapel had been lengthened to accommodate parishioners, and used the lack of Magnus and Rognvald dedications as evidence that the chapels and churches were already in place and dedicated by c. 1136 (the date when Magnus was canonised) (Clouston 1932, 144). Clouston noticed that many of the parish churches were built on earldom land and he associated the earldom and bishopric Bus with church and chapel sites. He believed the parish churches had been built by chieftains and earls in the parishes in which they resided or held Bu estates in, although

he could not explain the origin of parish churches where there was no Bu or chieftain residence. Clouston maintained that the term *ursland* was a corruption of *eyrisland* and that the chronology of the 'ursland chapel system' was as follows:

First a grouping of "towns" on a geographical basis to form *eyrislands* for the purpose of *skat*. Then, for the same reason of geographical convenience, the employment of the same districts as units for early ecclesiastical purposes; the first churches (in the form of private chapels) being erected in them, usually one in each district; though occasionally a couple of families might each build a chapel, or there might only be one chapel for a couple of districts. And hence the application of the word 'ursland' in some parishes (though not in all) to districts which were not true *eyrislands*, simply because most chapel districts all over the country really were of that denomination (Clouston 1932, 146).

Clouston dated his *ursland* chapel system to the eleventh century and he believed it was used as a basis for the selection of parish churches in the twelfth century (1932, 154). However, Clouston saw the parishes in which the parish churches were located as long-standing units preceding Christianity, stating, 'they were, in fact, relics of far-off heathen days adapted to christian purposes. When the Church became an established and efficient organisation, it found the islands already divided into areas suitable for a parochial system' (Clouston 1932, 154). The implication from Clouston's interpretation is that first the chapels and then the parish churches were erected at the behest of the ruling authority and were systematically arranged according to pre-existing land divisions, in a top-down manner. Clouston's theories on church development have been widely accepted and continue to be used. However, there have been great developments in archaeology and history since the early 1900s and therefore, his conclusions and the development of the parochial system ought to be re-examined in light of new archaeological, documentary and toponymic research. There are two areas to explore, firstly, whether Clouston's theories on the *ursland* system and parish formation still hold true; and secondly, what more, if anything, can be gleaned from a re-examination of the sites in their landscape context.

Clouston's chapels are described as 'ursland' chapels, a word once used in some areas of Orkney to denote a district or township. This word is a corruption of ON *eyrisland*, meaning *ounceland*, being a fiscal unit used for apportioning taxation. The problem lies, not so much with Clouston's interpretation, but rather with his choice of name for his

system of chapels. Clouston, believed Orkney was skatted for taxation in the ninth century by Harald Fairhair (Clouston 1918b, 229). This meant he had no issue with naming an ecclesiastical system after a corrupted fiscal term, as he believed the fiscal unit had been modified and used as a land unit prior to its adoption by the church. Clouston's chronology has since been challenged and there are several good reasons to suggest that the medieval taxation of Orkney was developed in the twelfth century. This is not to say there was no earlier form of taxation merely that the taxation system recorded in rentals at the close of the fifteenth century was based on developments in the twelfth, not the ninth century.

Several scholars have argued in support of a later date for the division of the land into *eyrisland* units. By noting the lack of early use of the term *eyrisland* in the saga texts, Andersen, in 1988, argued convincingly that there was no evidence for the use of the term *eyrisland* at the early date Clouston suggested. The first reference to the *eyrisland* in an Orkney context comes from *Hakonar Saga* and dates to c. 1263 (Vigfusson 1887, 363). Because of this Andersen suggested the territorially organised *eyrisland* system was introduced 'in connection with the establishment of a parish organisation and the introduction of annual tithes, as being an assessment of the production capacity of a landed property' (1988, 65). The *eyrislands* in Orkney and Shetland were identical and both valued at 18 pennylands, which implies the fiscal system was introduced to the island groups prior to 1195, after which Shetland was annexed to the Norwegian Crown and was administered directly from Norway and not by the earls of Orkney (Thomson 2001, 121). This provides a *terminus post quem* for the taxation system whilst Thomson and Smith provide a *terminus anti quem*. The *eyrisland* in Orkney and Shetland was valued at 1/8 Mark and there were 144 pennies in an Orkney and Shetland Mark, meaning the *eyrisland*, was valued at 18 pennies. This division of the Mark is the same as the Cologne Mark, which was in common circulation throughout Northern Europe from the mid-eleventh century, and so probably should be seen as having been introduced to Orkney in the late-eleventh or twelfth century, and we know from above that it must have been before 1195 (Thomson 1997, 68–70; 2001, 218; Smith 2000, 5–7). Smith proposes that medieval fiscal developments in Shetland were implemented c. 1300 and not from 800, and bases his argument on a thorough evaluation of Andro Smith's rental of 1628–43 and the 1266 Papa Stour document (2003). These arguments show the fiscal system dating from the twelfth century. Therefore, to

name chapels that were built in the eleventh and twelfth centuries 'ursland chapels' would be misleading, as the corrupted term 'ursland' must have developed after the chapels were built. The chapels would be better understood by associating them with settlement units using those identified as urslands by Clouston as a guide. By placing less emphasis on the 'system' of chapels, their foundation can be regarded as something much less structured and more reliant on the Christian devotion of individuals than on an order from above.

Settlement in medieval Orkney followed the pattern of previous settlement foci. This is evident in the numerous instances where a medieval or later settlement is found adjacent to or near an Iron Age settlement (for example Skaill in Deerness (Buteaux 1997), The Wirk in Rousay and Bu of Cairston in Stromness (Grieve 1999). The settlements took the form of townships, both single-farmed, usually indicated by *bu* or *bær* place-names, and composite, those with several small separately held properties (Clouston 1920; Gibbon 2006, 124–140). These townships were grouped into larger districts, using natural features for their boundaries, and it is in these topographically defined districts, which were occasionally called urslands, that the majority of chapels are located.

The location of the chapel site within the settlement area has proved of great importance for interpreting possible functions of the site. For example, the majority of sites with burial grounds are within 500 m of the sea and 300 m of the nearest medieval settlement, they are easily accessed and built on the best land. Whereas, the majority of chapels without burial grounds are more than 300 m from the nearest settlement and tend to be on less fertile ground and to be less accessible, with a higher proportion being on peninsulas and small islands. The association between chapel and burial ground and settlement implies the sites were private chapels built by those who held the land and serving a funerary purpose, whilst the more centrally located chapels without burial grounds may be interpreted as communally built sites for some form of shared worship/pre-parochial pastoral care. The chapels on small islands and peninsulas may form an earlier group of contemplative sites, perhaps dating from before the Scandinavian occupation of the islands (Gibbon 2006, 234–235).

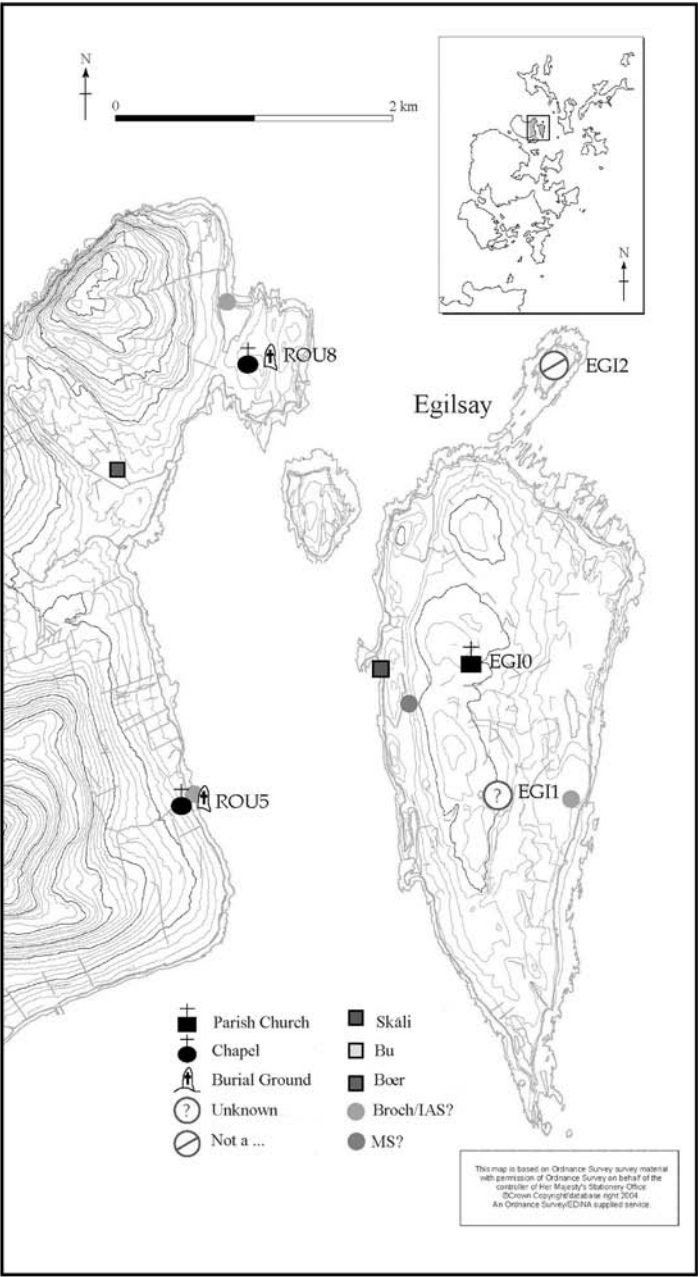
From landscape analysis, it is plausible to argue that the impetus behind the building of chapels was dependent on the individuals within a settlement area, rather than being imposed from above. This is evident in the choice of location and the way in which the chapels are

distributed, particularly in areas where settlement is known to have altered within the medieval period. The distribution of chapels/churches on Egilsay and the east coast of Rousay provides a good example (Illus. 17). This area has previously been shown as united by a Housabae estate, on either side of Egilsay Sound (Thomson 1993, 340–342). The division of this estate into smaller parcels of land in the medieval period may be reflected in the chapel locations. A tentative hypothesis is that a single church on Egilsay (perhaps originally dedicated to Mary), later to become the parish church of St Magnus, first served the area but after the Housabae was divided, smaller chapels were built in Rousay at Scockness in the north and Knarston in the south to serve the new communities which had formed.

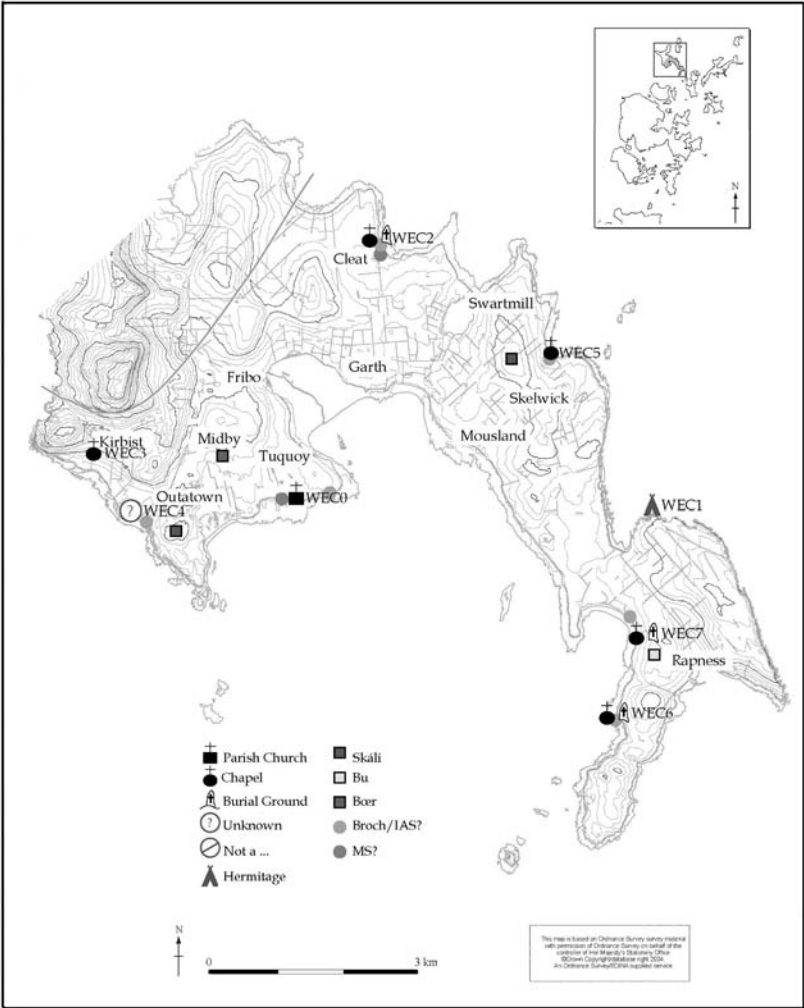
This can also be seen in Cross parish in Westray (Illus. 18), where the division of the Bu of Rapness may account for chapels at Skelwick and Cleat, and the original importance of the Bu is evidenced in the association between chapel, burial ground and medieval settlement. As an aside the possible Peterkirk, to the south of the Bu, may be a remnant of an earlier Pictish ecclesiastical administration and is useful in showing the complexity of the ecclesiastical landscape within a small settlement area.

By looking at the chapels in their landscape context it is apparent they relate to settlements on the ground, and their locations are individually determined by settlement patterns and settlement changes within the medieval period. From landscape analysis it is possible to challenge Clouston's belief in the systematic foundation of the chapels. It is perhaps more appropriate to see the chapels in individualistic terms both for ownership and purpose; some serving the needs of a single estate, some serving several smaller settlements, some belonging to monastic foundations, some being funerary in purpose, others pastoral and others contemplative. Importantly, there is no need to see the chapels as having been built at the direct instigation of a ruling authority. But rather to have been built by individuals, communities or institutions where and when appropriate, and to have been used for a varying length of time according to the needs of those using the chapel and how those needs and those people change over time. The foundation, use and demise of the chapels should be regarded as fluid and individually determined, perhaps inspired by the actions of an earl or bishop but not imposed by them.

This is linked to another realisation: by associating the chapels with settlement units and not fiscal units there is no need for the parishes



Illus. 17 Map of Rousay/Egilsay Housabae showing chapels.



Illus. 18 Map of Cross parish, Westray showing chapels.

to have been in existence before the chapels were built. In fact some chapel locations and settlement names indicate cross-parish associations that must have preceded parish formation. For example, at the northern boundary of Rendall parish, there are the two settlement place-names of Midgarth and Midland, both indicative of a split settlement which once straddled the boundary between Rendall and Evie. Therefore, the settlement must pre-date parish formation and subsequently the parish could not have been defined before the Scandinavians settled (its composite parts all have Old Norse names). This occurs again at the St Andrews/Deerness boundary where the shared place-name element Sanday indicates a settlement that straddled the parish boundary. Some chapel locations also point to cross-parish associations, in the north of St Andrews there is a chapel in Essonquoy which is more closely associated topographically with Wideford in St Ola than the rest of St Andrews, whilst in Stenness the chapel site and associated settlement at Clestrain is more closely linked topographically with nearby settlements in Orphir than with the rest of Stenness parish. These landscape factors when considered with documentary evidence strongly indicate that the parishes, rather than being of Iron Age date, are of high medieval origin.

The documentary evidence supporting this argument has already been touched upon above. The link between the parishes and the fiscal system, as evidenced in the rentals, is clear and the parishes must have been in place before the *eyrislands* were defined. In Orkney, there are two rentals that date from 1492 and 1505 respectively, and they may have been based on an earlier lost rental (Thomson 1996, ix). These fiscal documents were created to record the production value of the earldom and bishopric land, and in doing so they provide a snapshot of the distribution of settlement and land value at the turn of the sixteenth century. Interestingly, there are several instances where the parishes appear not to be fully formed: For example the parish of Birsay is denoted as Marwick and Birsay with the Birsay section only including the land in the Barony area omitting a large part of the parish, Holm is described as Paplay and Holm, and Sandwick as North and South Sandwick. These examples perhaps indicate smaller significant units that were retained after the initial implementation of the parish structure and still had their own identity in the fifteenth century, only later changing to Birsay, Holm and Sandwick parishes proper. Had the parishes been pre-Christian units they would surely have been fully formed long before the fifteenth century and the above instances

would not have occurred. The names of the parishes arguably also support a medieval origin, with thirteen of the thirty-five parishes being named after their parish church dedications in documentary sources dating from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries: St Ola, St Andrews, St Mary's (South Ronaldsay), St Peter (South Ronaldsay, Stronsay), St Nicholas (Stronsay), Cross (Stenness, Stromness, Westray and Sanday), Lady (Sanday, Stronsay and Westray). Of the remaining twenty-two, six are named after the district in which the parish church is located, implying that the district was the most significant feature of the parish at the time of its naming, perhaps partly due to the location of the church in the district (Gibbon 2006, 234–238).

The discussion above shows the chronology of the formation of parishes and the processes of chapel foundation were worthy of reconsideration. One question that helps focus on settlement beyond the confines of the parish, and this is a question which seems fundamental for understanding the parishes and yet has not been addressed in recent times is, what is the purpose of the parish? It can be argued that for the population, the parish is defined by the parish church and attendance of the church develops a community spirit, and particularly the communal use of a single burial ground; later this is continued through attendance of parish schools and care of the poor, both administered by the church. For the authorities, the parish is the mechanism by which the islands are divided into practical units for effective ecclesiastical and secular administration, and as such it becomes the accepted unit used in documents of an administrative nature, for example rentals and court records. The use of the parish as the main unit for denoting an area, as seen in secular and ecclesiastical administration is not universal. The fundamental practical unit, the unit used by the farmer living and working the land, has always been the township and grouped township unit. These townships have developed from the earliest settlement of the islands, were often populated by an extended family, and continue to govern settlement today. It is arguable that prior to the need for parochial organisation and ecclesiastical administration, there was no need for a parish unit and that society was based on the smaller township and larger pre-parish units.

If we accept that parishes were defined by shared attendance of a parish church, then the location of the parish churches should help with understanding the formation of the parishes and those responsible for their designation. The parish churches, as Clouston suggested, appear from their locations, to have originated as chapels. The parish churches

share similarities in location with the chapels and there is a clear connection between the parish churches and high-status settlements. Of the thirty-five parish churches, 20 are associated with the high-status place-names *Skáli*, *Bær* and *Bu* (some with more than one of the three), 10 are centrally located within a township and central to the parish, and the remaining five are next to large settlements with less high-status place-names. The 25 parish churches associated with a high-status settlement are listed in the table (Table 3) below. This indicates that the majority of parish churches were deliberately associated with land held by the earl, the bishop or chieftains, rather than being placed centrally for the benefit of the parishioner. Only in the 10 instances where there were no estates owned by the ruling classes were the parish churches built in a place suitable for the majority of the population of the parish. The landscape analysis supports Clouston's argument that the parish churches were upgraded chapels and that there was a clear association between earldom land and parish church. This association goes beyond the pairing of *Bu* sites and parish churches to there being a much more extensive association between high-status settlements and parish churches. This implies that the parish churches were designated at a time when the estates which they are associated with were flourishing and, more importantly, that the earl and the ruling classes were responsible in part for their selection. There were spiritual and monetary advantages in founding and maintaining a parish church, and it seems that where possible the earl and chieftains wanted to benefit from them.

Table 3 Parish churches associated with a high status settlement.

<i>Place-name</i>	<i>Parish church</i>
Bu	St Magnus Birsay; St Lawrence Burray; Faray; Flotta; St Nicholas Holm; St Nicholas' Hoy; St Nicholas Orphir; St Andrew's St Andrews; Ladykirk Lady Sanday; Crosskirk Stenness (?); Crosskirk Stromness
Bær	Crosskirk Cross Sanday; Ladykirk Lady Sanday; St Mary's Shapinsay; St Mary's Lady Stronsay; Crosskirk Cross Westray
Skail	St Magnus Birsay; St Mary's Deerness; St Mary's Eday; St Magnus Egilsay; St Nicholas' Holm; St Mary's Rousay; Crosskirk Cross Sanday; Ladykirk Lady Sanday; St Peter's Sandwich
Holland	North Ronaldsay; St Nicholas' Nicholas Stronsay
Kirkhouse	Peterkirk North Parish South Ronaldsay
Sand	St Columba's Burness Sanday
Strenzie	St Peter's St Peter's Stronsay

By reading the *Orkneyinga Saga* a context for the designation of parish churches and the reorganisation of the land for more formalised administration can be proposed. In 1136, the cathedral of St Magnus was founded in the growing mercantile centre of Kirkwall (Guðmundsson 1965, lxxvi). This was possible due to collaboration between Earl Rognvald and Bishop William and this move signifies a turning point in the history of secular and ecclesiastical authority. With the move to Kirkwall the bishopric is established in an urban centre and the bishop becomes responsible for an urban cathedral, with a dynastic mausoleum and guardianship of the sacred remains of Saint Magnus, the newly canonised warrior saint of Orkney. At this time, more than any other recorded in the saga, there was a need for reorganisation and restructuring of the ecclesiastical administration of the islands. This was necessary to properly fund and support the cathedral and its clergy and to provide a more structured form of diocesan management. The earls' seat of power moved to Kirkwall at the same time and thus the two permanent seats of power were located side by side. The islands were flourishing, as evidenced in the saga, the architecture and the material culture; there was no more suitable time for a reorganisation to occur than when the secular and ecclesiastical authorities were strong and working together. Without this collaboration such an upheaval (for that is what it must have been) could not have occurred. What started in the twelfth century under Rognvald and William took generations to complete but there are good reasons to suggest that it was they who started it.

This twelfth century creation of parish churches is comparable to similar situations in Scotland and Norway where the parish churches are designated in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, some within parishes that replace larger territorial units previously used to administer less structured forms of ecclesiastical and secular administration and some in newly formed units (Gibbon 2006, 41–62). Of particular significance in Norway is the *herað* unit, a large administrative unit found throughout Scandinavia and evidenced in Orkney in the name *Byrgisherað* from the *Orkneyinga Saga* (Guðmundsson 1965, xxxi, 80) now corrupted into the two parish names of Birsay and Harray. The *herað* has previously been assumed to encompass the modern parishes of Birsay and Harray, but from looking at the topography it is possible to suggest that the original *herað* was a larger unit comprising parts of four parishes. This unit surrounds an area of wetland and is defined

by hills and coast, with good access from five coastal areas, each with a high-status settlement and church/chapel: Birsay, Marwick, Sandwick, Cairston and Walkmill. The existence of the *herað* is not in doubt, but by suggesting its boundaries are not associated with parish boundaries and instead are made up of several parts of parishes, this further adds to the argument that the parishes replaced earlier larger administrative units. This can also be argued in the North Isles where the boundaries between parishes in the islands appear particularly arbitrary, looking as if created by drawing lines on a map rather than evolving over time. These larger units may have been used primarily by the secular authorities to organise troops and to govern by means of assemblies (as recorded in the *Orkneyinga Saga*). It is also feasible to suppose that these larger units were the basis of a loose form of ecclesiastical organisation prior to the parochial system and may have been the units behind the 'Minster system' proposed by Lamb (1997). The prospect of being able to discover possible early territorial units has been realised through examination of the landscape and there is a great amount of work to be done in further studying the likelihood of such units by comparison with Scandinavia, Scotland and other areas within Europe.

The re-examination of the medieval church in Orkney has been surprisingly informative and there is still much to be considered as a result of these preliminary findings. The theories proposed by Clouston have been reconsidered, and a new chronology tested in light of the findings from the landscape analysis. The findings extend beyond the ecclesiastical landscape and have bearing on all aspects of medieval life, as the church did at that time. What began as a very natural and organic process of founding chapels within the landscape in the eleventh century, had by the close of the thirteenth century been developed and manipulated by the ruling ecclesiastical and secular authorities into a neat, structured, efficient and enduring system of administration based on clearly defined land units created for that very purpose. It is also possible to suggest, tentatively, that these parish units were preceded by larger units for the purpose of secular organisation and used by the church in its early stages for administering a basic form of pastoral care, perhaps based on Minster churches. At this stage these are only tentative suggestions but the potential for new interpretations of settlement development in the medieval period has been realised by using a landscape history methodology and its continued use will no doubt produce new and exciting hypotheses for consideration.

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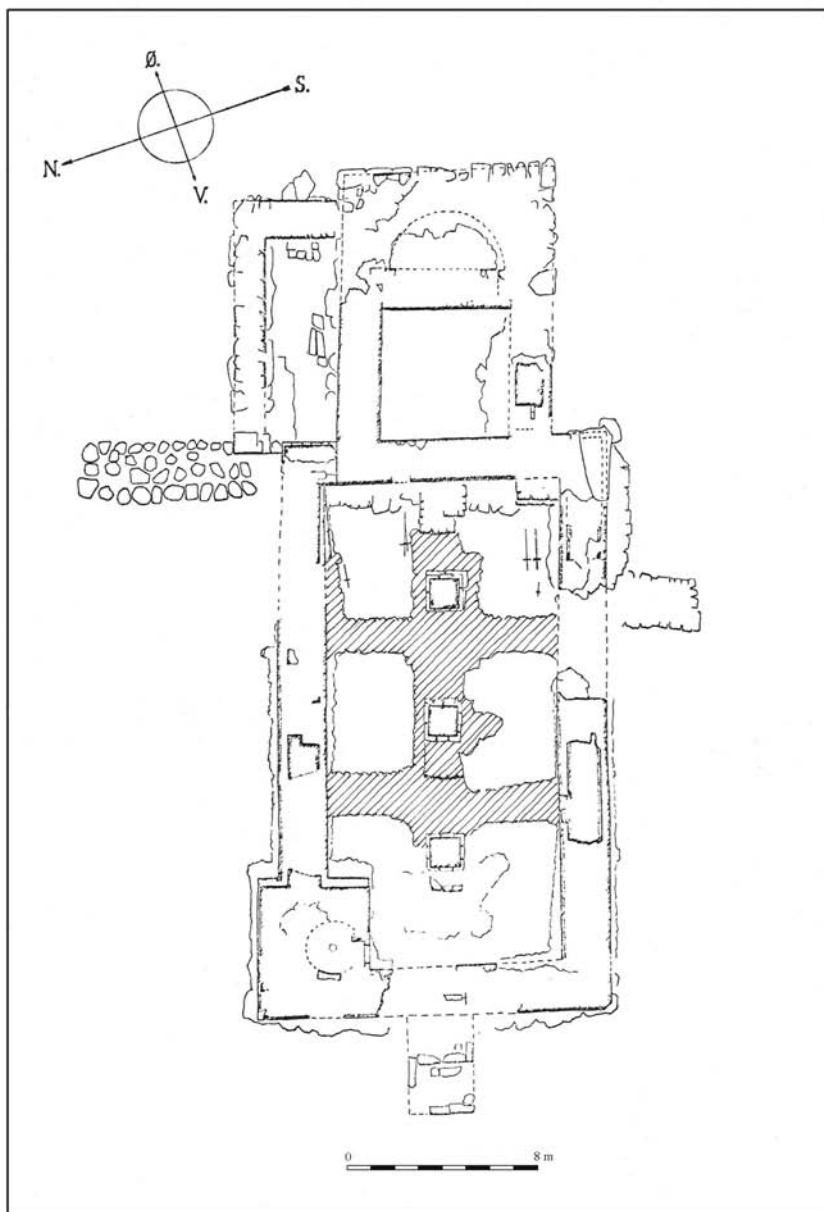
THE CHURCH OF ST. CLEMENT IN OSLO

Hans-Emil Lidén

In 2004 Barbara Crawford wrote an important article on “The Churches dedicated to St. Clement in Norway” (Crawford 2004). The article was part of a wider study of the cult of St. Clement in Scandinavia and the British Isles, on which she has been working in recent years. Most of the Clement churches in Norway have disappeared without leaving a trace—a fact which compelled Barbara to treat them only very briefly in her survey. With this as background it is tempting to give a more detailed presentation of the Norwegian Clement church we think we know something about—*St. Clement’s in Oslo*—as a tribute to an eminent scholar.

In the written sources a St. Clement’s Church in Oslo is mentioned for the first time in 1264. The last time we hear about the church is in 1488, but the parish of St. Clement is referred to as late as in 1527. The church was probably a ruin by then, and was pulled down shortly afterwards. Nobody knew where it was situated until Gerhard Fischer unearthed the remnants of a stone church in 1920–21 that he thought must be the church of St. Clement, basing his theory on the topographical evidence he found in the sagas (Fischer 1950). This identification has never been questioned since. Fischer’s work was resumed by Ole Egil Eide in 1970–71. He examined the foundations and what was left of the walls, and excavated a series of burials beneath the church that were older than the church itself. He published his results in an M.A. thesis in 1973—a thesis on which all further work on the church and the significant role it plays for the understanding of the early history of Oslo—including this article—must be based (Eide 1974).

The church Gerhard Fischer found might at first glance seem to be an ordinary parish church with a nave and a narrower chancel. An untraditional feature is, however, that the nave is divided into two parts by a longitudinal row of pillars along the middle of the building. The church did not have an ordinary west tower—just a small staircase turret in the northwest corner of the nave (Illus. 19). It is not at all certain that this structure was visible above the roof. It might equally well have served as a staircase-well leading up to the room above the nave.

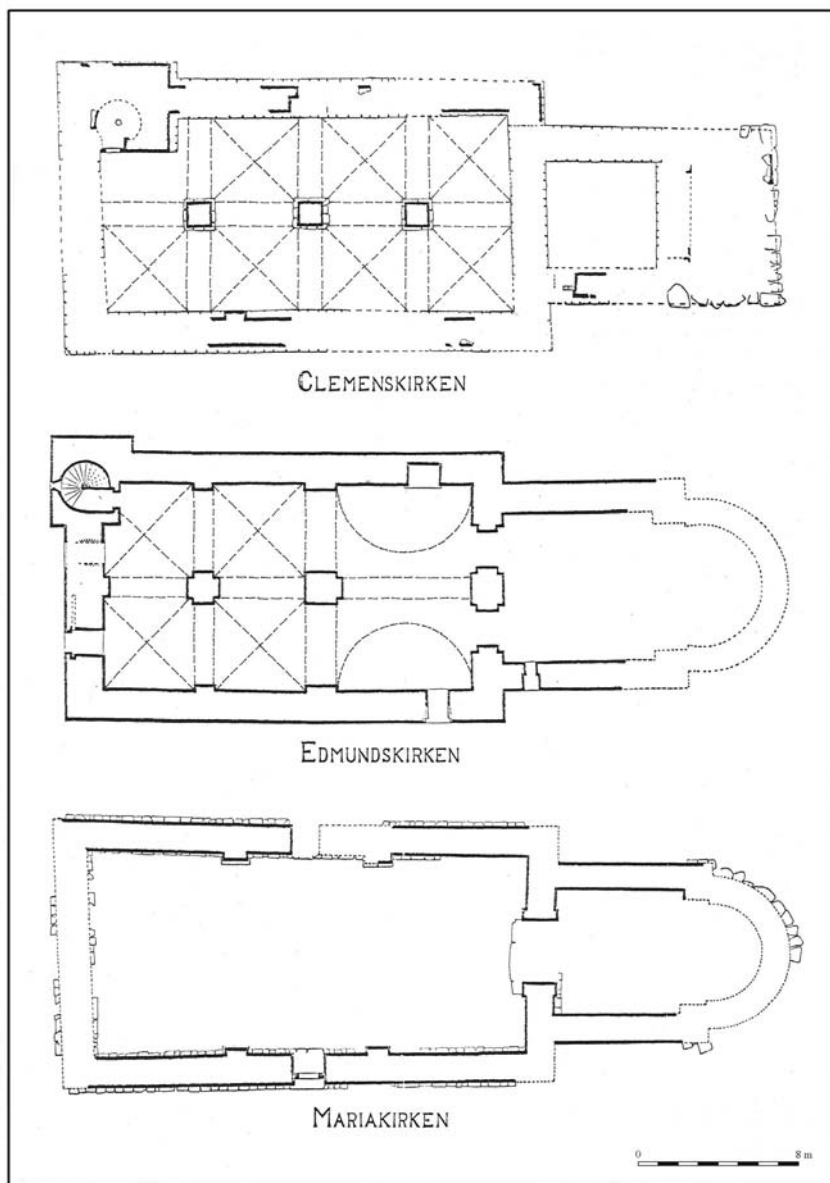


Illus. 19 Ground plan of the church of St. Clement
(after G. Fischer/O. E. Eide).

In 1147 a Cistercian abbey was founded at Hovedøya, a small island just outside Oslo. The Cistercians took over a little stone church with the same peculiar double-naved plan as St. Clement in the town. The church was probably dedicated to the English martyr-king St. Edmund (Johnsen 1969). A third building in this group is St. Mary's—the king's own church in Oslo—situated on the outskirts of the town, in the vicinity of the royal residence.

The three churches are about the same size, and were probably built about the same time (Illus. 20). The nave of St. Clement's measures 10.5×20.7 metres, St. Edmund's nave is 2.3 m. shorter while the nave of St. Mary's is 10.2×21.7 m. Based on his studies of the stone material used by the builders, the way the foundations were laid and how the walls were built, Eide has established a relative chronology of the building process. The work probably started with the erection of the chancels of St. Mary's and St. Clement's where lime ashlar and some gneiss were used as building material. St. Mary's got an apse while St. Clement's got a square east end—possibly as a result of a change of plans. The second building phase in both churches—the erection of the nave—introduced a new building material: small blocks of silty limestone laid in narrow courses. The building of St. Edmund's at Hovedøya probably started at this time. The masonry in the whole church is the same silty limestone we find in the naves of St. Mary's and St. Clement's.

The foundations show that the pillars in St. Clement's and St. Edmund's belong to the same building phase as the nave walls. The double chancel arch in St. Edmund's suggests that the pillars were planned from the very start in this building, while the fact that the foundation for the pillars in St. Clement's had no connection with the foundation beneath the chancel arch tells us that the chancel of St. Clement's was begun, and probably even finished, before the pillars were planned. Both churches were originally planned with two pillars dividing the nave into six rectangular bays, but the plans were changed. St. Clement's got three pillars, dividing the nave into eight square bays, while the pillars in St. Edmund's were moved westwards, thus obtaining four square bays and two easterly rectangular bays. The walls of St. Edmund's have pilasters corresponding with the pillars which shows that the walls were erected after the plan was changed. In St. Clement's only one pilaster could be traced. This pilaster was, however, placed in accordance with the original pillar scheme. Most remarkably there are



Illus. 20 Ground plan of St. Clement's, St. Edmund's and St. Mary's (after O. E. Eide).

also remnants of four pilasters in the walls of the nave of St. Mary's, although this church never had any pillars.

Why did St. Edmund's and St. Clement's get pillars? Was it simply in order to strengthen the floor of an upper storey, or did the builders intend to build vaults? The latter is the more likely explanation. Not least the decision to change the numbers or position of pillars favours such a belief. Perhaps the original plan was to build two longitudinal (stilted) barrel vaults or three transverse barrel vaults. Instead, eight crossvaults over square bays were chosen in St. Clement's, while four crossvaults over the western square bays, and probably two barrel vaults over the eastern bays were chosen in St. Edmund's. Fischer thought the two eastern bays had transverse barrel vaults, based on observations he could make during the restoration of the walls in 1932. The solution was probably necessitated by the workers' lack of experience in building vaults. They seem to have been reluctant—or even unable—to build crossvaults over oblong bays. The (in our view) obvious solution—to build two square crossvaults over the nave without any pillars at all—was possibly regarded as too daring a project. But we cannot rule out the possibility that pillars and smaller and lower vaults were preferred for practical reasons. Such vaults gave room for a more spacious upper storey in the church.

St. Mary's, St. Clement's and St. Edmund's were built more or less simultaneously, with St. Edmund's probably the latest to be completed. Eide shows that the finishing of this church must have taken place before the Cistercians took over the site in 1147. This year represents a *terminus ante quem* for the whole group. Another important year is 1130 when King Sigurd Jorsalfar was buried in the choir wall of the cathedral of St. Hallvard in Oslo. At this time at least the eastern part of the cathedral was completed. The cathedral was built with the same sort of silty limestone as the naves of St. Clement's and St. Mary's and the whole structure of St. Edmund's. This means that the three churches and the cathedral were under construction at the same time, but that the building of the chancels of St. Mary's and St. Clement's probably started before the work on the cathedral was begun. It is generally presumed that the building of the cathedral started early in the twelfth century, but there is some reason to believe that the erection of St. Mary's and St. Clement's started a little earlier—say around 1100. We must conclude, therefore, that at a surprisingly early date in the history of Oslo two stone churches, a royal chapel and a town

church—which later on, after the introduction of the tithe, became an ordinary parish church—were built within the town limits. A little later a similar church was built on Hovedøya. Why anyone should build an expensive stone church there is rather puzzling. Very few, if any, people were living there—and by no means so many that they needed a church of their own.

Moreover, the church on Hovedøya and St. Clement's were both given a highly unusual form. Eide has tried to find out where this double-naved type of building originally came from. According to him there are a lot of double-naved churches all over Europe, but none with the special design we find in St. Clement's and St. Edmund's. We are left with the rather sensational conclusion, he says, that we cannot point to any single church in East, West or North Europe, that could have acted as a model for the two churches in Oslo (Eide 1974, 157). Thus the type as such is not imported from abroad. Rather it must be regarded as a local answer to a difficult building problem: the construction of vaults. It is possible that St. Clement's was originally planned without vaults, but got pillars and vaults as an afterthought. In St. Edmund's, however, pillars and vaults were obviously planned from the start—inspired by the solution the builders had reached in St. Clement's.

It is not easy to explain why such an unusual solution was chosen. Protection against fire could be one reason. Another reason could be, as mentioned above, the need to establish a solid floor for an upper-storey store-room. Sverre's saga tells us that town-churches sometimes served as shelters during the civil war that ravaged Norway in the twelfth century. In Bergen King Sverre's men sought refuge in the main churches when the city was raided by a local chieftain in 1180 (Sverre's saga, ch. 49). The saga's story of how "the townsmen and the merchants moved their goods into the churches" when the peasants attacked King Sverre in Oslo in 1200 (Sverre's saga, ch. 162) is of special interest. Here the merchants are mentioned as a special group besides the townsmen, and it is clearly stated that the churches were used as store-houses in times of war. Perhaps this explains why we find *two* stone churches—the church of St. Clement and the church of St. Nicholas—almost side by side in the oldest part of Oslo? One of the churches could have been built by the merchants for their own special purposes, while the other one was built by the townsmen. St. Clement's, which later became an ordinary parish church, was probably the townsmen's church. St. Nicholas' is mentioned in the saga of King Haakon Haakonsson in connection with fighting that took place in Oslo in 1240. A ruin of

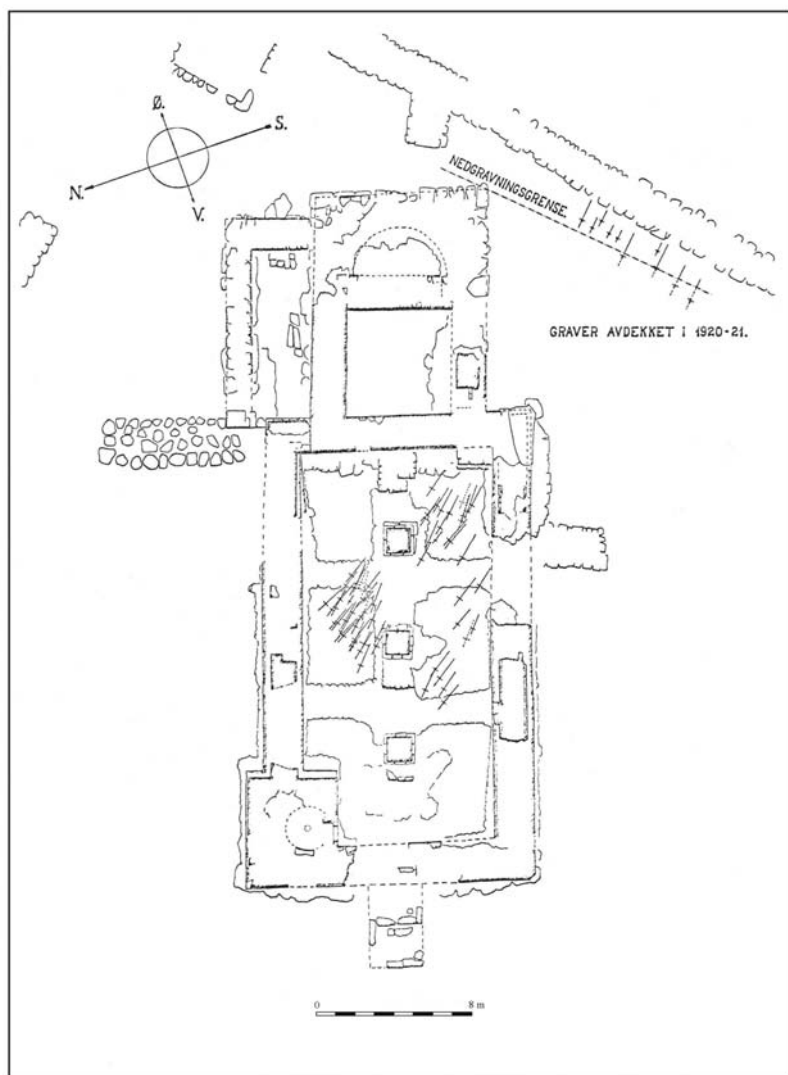
a small, rectangular stone building, identified in 1877, is commonly believed to be the ruin of St. Nicholas's.

Perhaps St. Edmund's at Hovedøya too was built by a group of merchants or other visitors who wished to build a church of their own outside the town limits. Soon, however, they must have realized that the site was too isolated for their purpose and consequently handed the church over to the Cistercians when they arrived.

Whoever owned St. Clement's and St. Edmund's, the most reasonable explanation of their special shape is that they should act as shelters for people and goods in turbulent times. Why St. Mary's did not get a similar shape could be explained along the same lines. This church was the King's own church situated beside his fortified residence. When war threatened, those who belonged to the church gathered in the residence—not in the church.

Gerhard Fischer's and Ole Egil Eide's research has pushed the history of St. Clement's back to 1100. Even if the dedication to St. Clement is mentioned for the first time as late as 1264 in the written sources, there is no reason to doubt that the church was dedicated to St. Clement from the start. But what about the time before 1100? The most exciting result of Eide's excavation was his detection of 150 burials in situ within an excavated area of 36 m² beneath the nave of the church. In total there must have been an even larger number of burials, because a lot of loose bones and parts of coffins around the burials showed that numerous burials were removed when new graves were dug. Only seven burials could be dated to the period after the stone church was built—the rest were older than this church. Based on stratigraphical evidence the older burials could be divided into two groups: some very early burials, and a secondary group buried a little later. The earliest group consisted of 60 burials, one on top of the other, in as much as five layers. Most of the dead were buried in narrow coffins made of boards fastened with wooden nails. A few were buried in coffins made of wooden trunks, and some had a hazel stick with them in the coffin. Men, women and children were buried side by side (Illus. 21). Most remarkably the burials were aligned askew in relation to the longitudinal axis of the stone church. This axis lays 20° to the south of the geographical E-W axis, while the burials were turned no less than 60° to the south of the geographical E-W axis, i.e. almost NNW-SSE.

The density of burials, the continuous use of the area as a graveyard, and the burial customs with the lack of grave-goods as a conspicuous



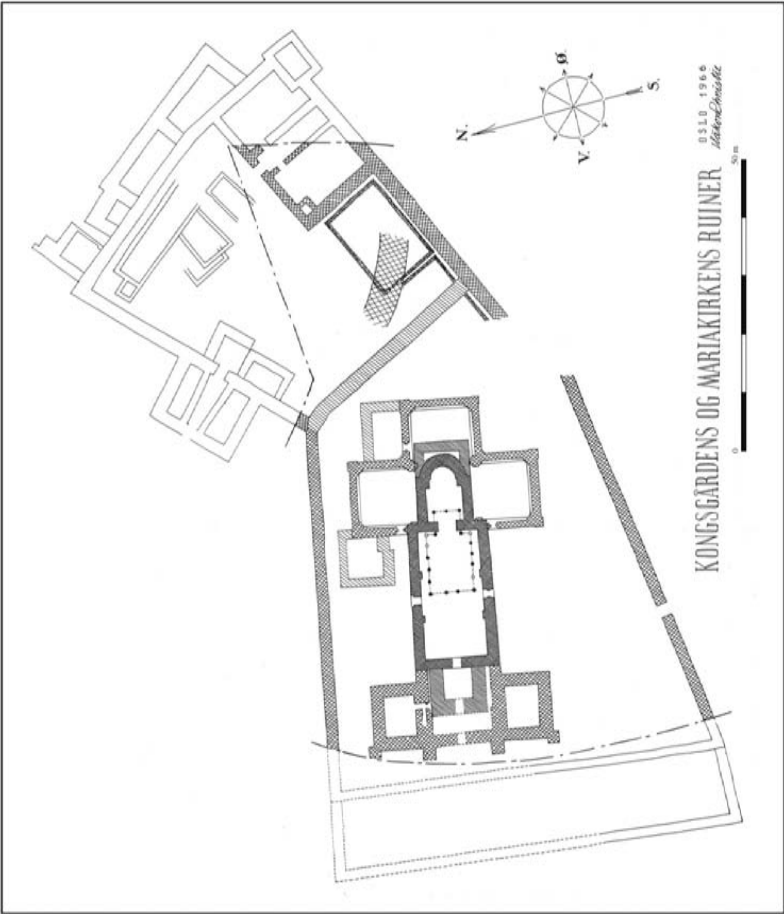
Illus. 21 The oldest group of burials beneath the stone church
(after O. E. Eide).

trait, tell us that this must be a churchyard. But a churchyard without a church is unthinkable. Where was the church situated in this case?

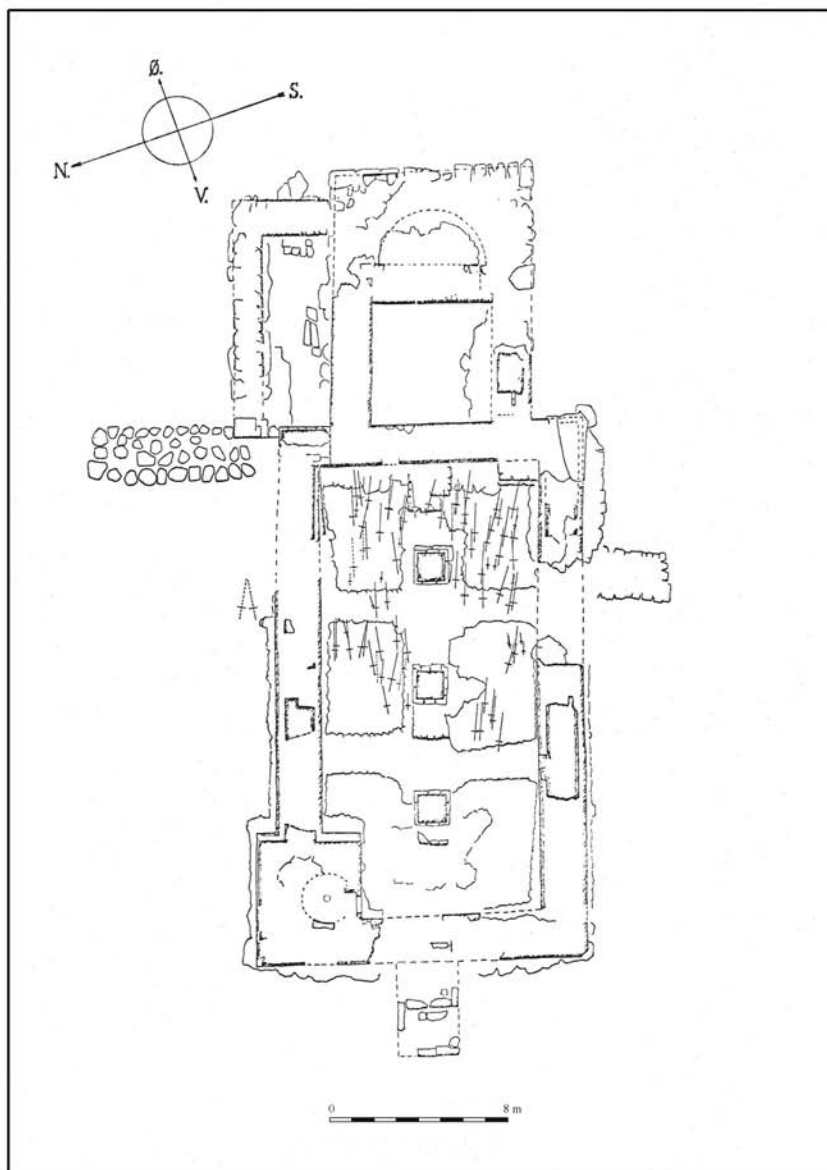
The excavation of medieval churchyards often shows that the density of burials increases when one approaches the walls of the church—especially the south wall. The longitudinal axis of the church building also determines the orientation of the graves. In St. Clement's there was a concentration of burials against a line forming the hypotenuse of a triangular area in the NE corner of the nave. Within this triangular area not a single burial could be identified. This gave Eide the idea that the line possibly marked the (south) wall of a church building. A dark, firm layer covering parts of the area he interpreted as remnants of a possible floor, but apart from that he found no traces of any building construction.

The churchyard was established on "virgin soil", which means there was no trace of earlier human activity in the area. But after a while the whole churchyard was filled up with a sand-layer, which in some places was almost one metre thick. The limits of this layer could not be determined precisely. It could have stretched at least 50 m. to SW of the church, where a corresponding layer was observed by Peter Blix in 1878. A similar layer was also identified down at *Øren* in 1961 in connection with the excavation of an early castle and a small, wooden church at the same spot where the high-medieval royal residence and St. Mary's later stood (Illus. 22). In this layer a hoard of coins dated to the reign of King Harald Hardraade (1046–1066) was found (Skaare 1966 p. 93), and it is reasonable to think that it was he—the king who according to Snorre Sturlason was the "founder" of Oslo—who started the construction of the castle and the church. Beneath this layer was, however, an older layer containing bones, charcoal and artefacts that indicated some sort of settlement (Christie 1966 p. 86). If the sand-layer at *Øren* is contemporary with the sand-layer covering the very earliest graves beneath St. Clement's, these graves could contain some of the people who were living at *Øren* before the royal castle and the church were built.

All the burials belonging to the secondary group of early burials—81 in all—were dug into the sand-layer that covered the churchyard. They did not represent any break with the burial customs of the very earliest burials—with one important exception: different orientation (Illus. 23). They had the same orientation as the first royal church down at *Øren* and—with small deviations—all later churches within the town, St. Clement's included. This shows that a new church was built together



Illus. 22 Plan of St. Mary's church and the King's residence around 1320. The stone church was extended around 1300. The plan of the first wooden church is shown within the stone church (after H. Christie).



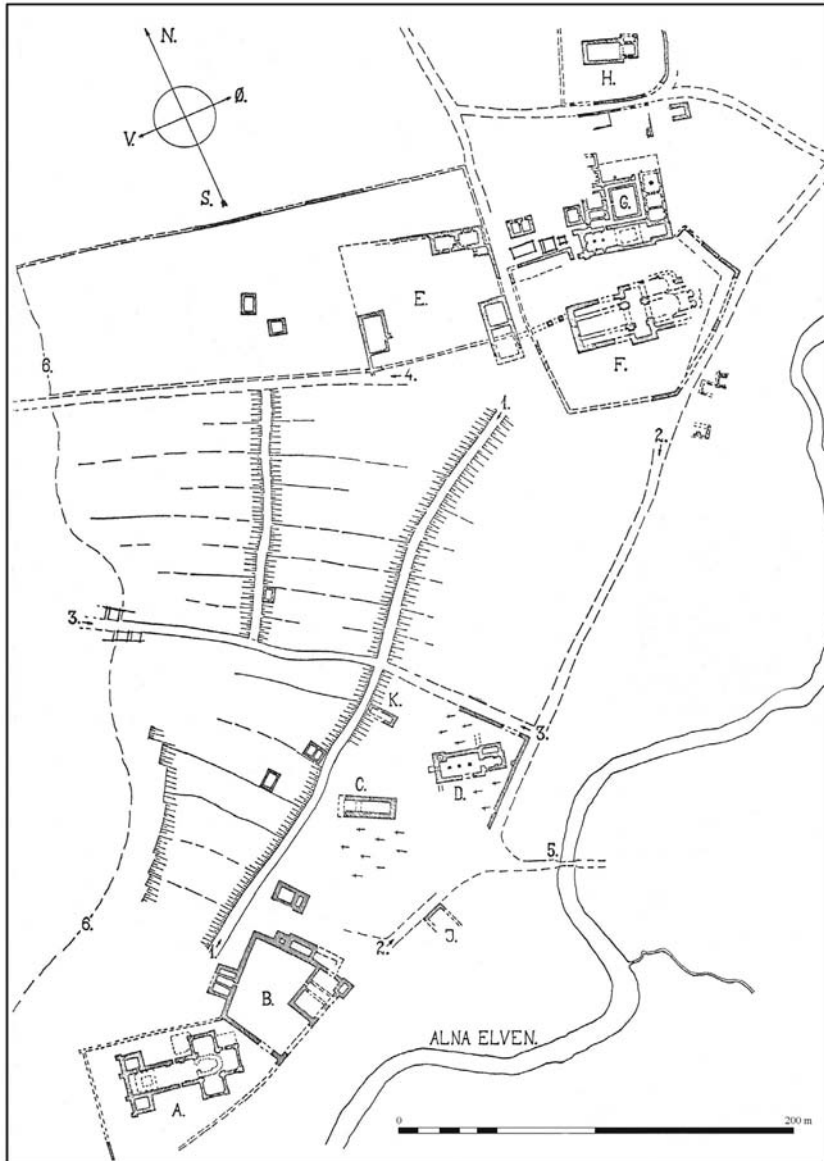
Illus. 23 The secondary group of burials older than the stone church
(after O. E. Eide).

with the deposition of the sand layer—parallel with what happened down by the king's castle. No traces of this church could be identified, but Eide suggests that it could have been situated under the chancel of the later stone church. No burials were detected here during Fischer's excavation in 1920–21.

Based on an analysis of the relative age of the burials and a series of radio-carbon datings, Eide draws the conclusion that the first of the very earliest burials beneath St. Clement's must go back to around 1000, while the first burials of the secondary group occurred around 60 years later. This means that at around 1000 a first church was built on the site in consequence of the fact that a permanent or semi-permanent settlement of some sort existed in the vicinity. The most convincing answer to the question why this church was so badly orientated is that the church and the churchyard probably had to fit in with surrounding roads and built-up areas. Around 60 years later another church was built on the same spot. This church was more "normally" orientated, possibly because the orientation of the royal church down at Øren from now on served as a model and a norm. But to whom the two early churches were dedicated remains an open question.

The rather sensational results of Eide's investigation started a lively discussion among archaeologists and historians about the origins of Oslo. Is Snorre's statement that King Harald Hardraade "founded" Oslo correct—and if so, what did that actually mean? (Illus. 24). Did some sort of organized township exist before King Harald's time, or was the built-up area part of a semi-permanent settlement, e.g. a seasonal market-place? It goes beyond the scope of this article to refer the whole range of this discussion, but the point of departure for it—that a small community settled around a church existed before King Harald's time—is an undeniable fact after the excavation of St. Clement's. Whether Erik Schia's hypothesis that the building of the earliest church on the site was due to Danish influence (Schia 1991), or Barbara Crawford's opinion that it was built by King Olav Tryggvason (Crawford 2004), is the more correct, is in fact impossible to decide.

A practical result of Eide's investigation was that Oslo could celebrate its millennium in 2000—only fifty years after the celebration of the 900th anniversary! This shows that archaeological research can sometimes produce some unexpected consequences.



Illus. 24 Oslo around 1300. Conjectural map, based on archaeological material and written evidence. A. St. Mary's; B. The King's residence; C. St. Nicholas'; D. St. Clement's; E. The bishop's residence; F. The cathedral of St. Hallvard; G. The dominican monastery of St. Olav; H. Church of the Holy Cross (after G. Fischer).

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THE SHETLAND CHAPEL-SITES PROJECT 1999–2000

Christopher D. Morris
with Kevin J. Brady and Paul G. Johnson

Introduction

It is a matter of record that Barbara Crawford has, throughout her academic career, taken a keen interest in the Viking and Late Norse periods in Shetland. A glance at the Bibliography in her ground-breaking *Scandinavian Scotland* volume, published in 1987 (and reprinted since), under her own name confirms that amply (Crawford 1987, 254). This interest has been most evidently demonstrated by inter-disciplinary work on the island of Papa Stour and her major project at ‘Da Biggins’ (Crawford & Ballin Smith 1999). Even in the 1987 general volume, however, Barbara demonstrated her thorough grasp of the issues surrounding ‘Conversion and the Organization of Christianity’ in Chapter 6. Here, her masterly summary brought together diverse material and pointed the way forward for other scholars, while taking due account of the pioneering work of individuals such as her St Andrews colleague, Ronald Cant (for instance Cant 1975; 1984). An indication of the direction of her future interests is given by the volume she edited in 1998, following the Fourth St Andrews Day Conference (Crawford (Ed.) 1998), and the Fifth Conference in 2001 then brought things full-circle back to Papa Stour, and the subject of the elusive ‘Papar’ (Crawford (Ed.) 2002).

The Viking and Early Settlement Archaeological Research Project (VESARP) began work in 1997 on Chapel-sites in Shetland essentially following up the sorts of issues signaled by Barbara in 1987, and also issues raised by some of my own work in Orkney (see Morris 1996; 2003; 2004). This early work is described in other papers (for example, Morris & Brady with Johnson 1999, Morris 2001). The following paper outlines the more recent results of desk-based assessment, walk-over ‘audit’ survey, and more detailed topographic and geophysical surveys carried out by VESARP on the pre-Reformation Chapel-sites of Unst, Fetlar and Yell. Work in Shetland by VESARP on sites outside these three islands will not be described here, but is of some significance and

of undoubted interest to Barbara, requiring a more extended discussion than can be afforded here. However, they have both recently achieved an interim publication stage (Barrowman 2003; Brady 2002).

Regrettably, due to my own managerial position as Vice-Principal at Glasgow University since 2000, it has not been possible so far for me to follow up the suggestions for further work made in the reports referred to below. Indeed, this paper is based upon one delivered to the Faroese Viking Congress in July 2001, but unable to be brought to fruition in time for the deadline for its publication. I sure that Barbara will appreciate that in offering this small account of further work carried out in an area of particular interest to herself, I am also discharging an academic debt to my colleagues (including her) in bringing to print a summary account of important material currently only available in the 'grey literature' with which Archaeology in Scotland and Britain more generally abounds.

However, I am sure that Barbara is as impatient as I for further progress to be made, and will welcome the fact that, just as she has retired from full-time academe to pursue her own particular interests, so I shall be returning to *my* own particular academic interests, as I step down from this position in 2006. Watch this (or another!) space...!

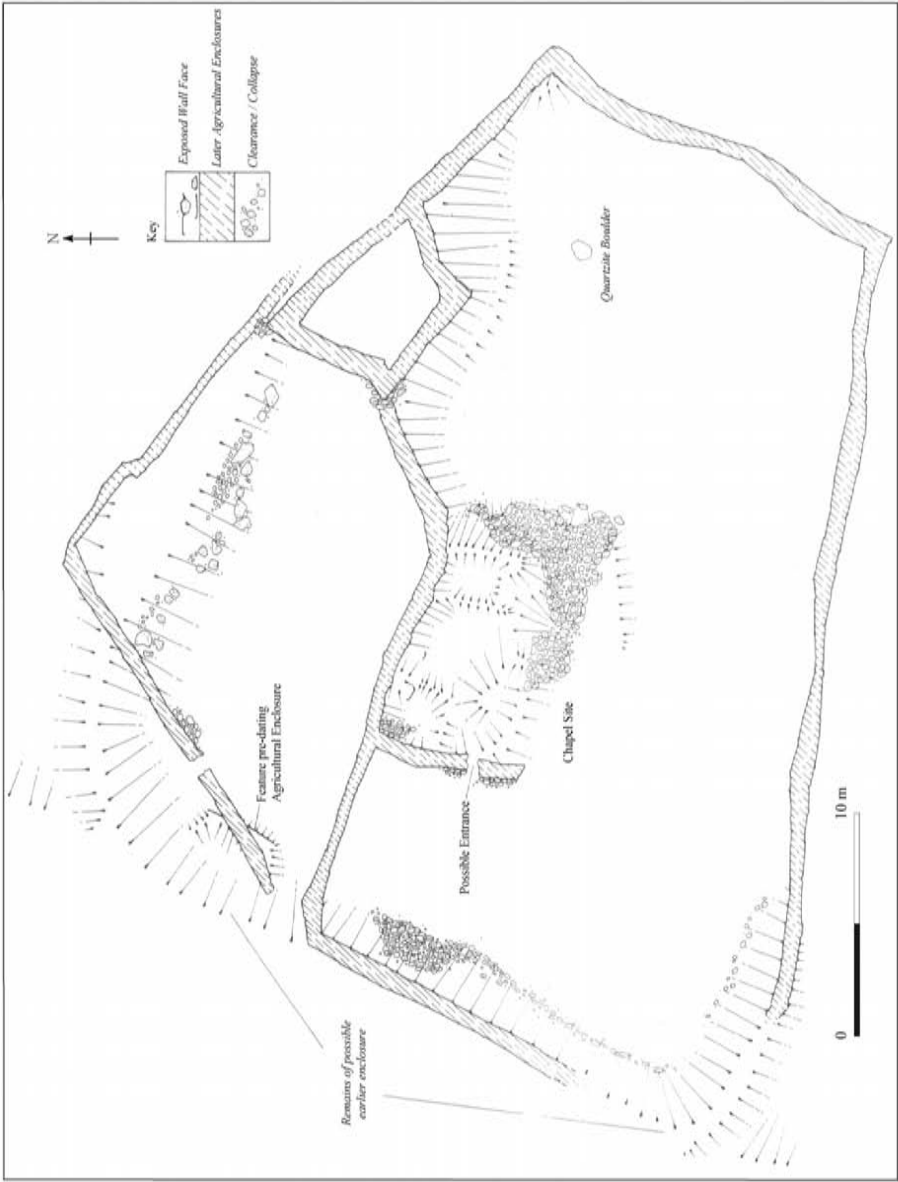
The Unst Chapel-Sites Survey

The earlier work in 1997 and 1998 has been outlined elsewhere and will not be repeated here (Morris & Brady with Johnson 1999; Morris 2001). A third field campaign on the chapel-sites of Unst took place in late summer 1999. This was a continuation of the Phase I non-intrusive survey at these sites, focussing upon geophysical survey directed by Paul Johnson and further topographic survey, co-ordinated by Kevin Brady (Brady & Johnson 2000). Also, in 1999, two sites that had been unable to be examined in the previous two years were finally visited as part of the 'audit' survey (Kirkamool and Uyea). The walkover survey of the sites at Kirkamool and Uyea had varying degrees of success. There is little to add to the place-name evidence of the former: three sites were examined but none are particularly convincing as a potential chapel-site. Uyea, on the other hand, is a very important site, and has considerable potential. The standing remains are of considerable interest, although it should be noted that it is not a conventional 'nave-and-chancel' building as there has been confusion in the past over the so-called

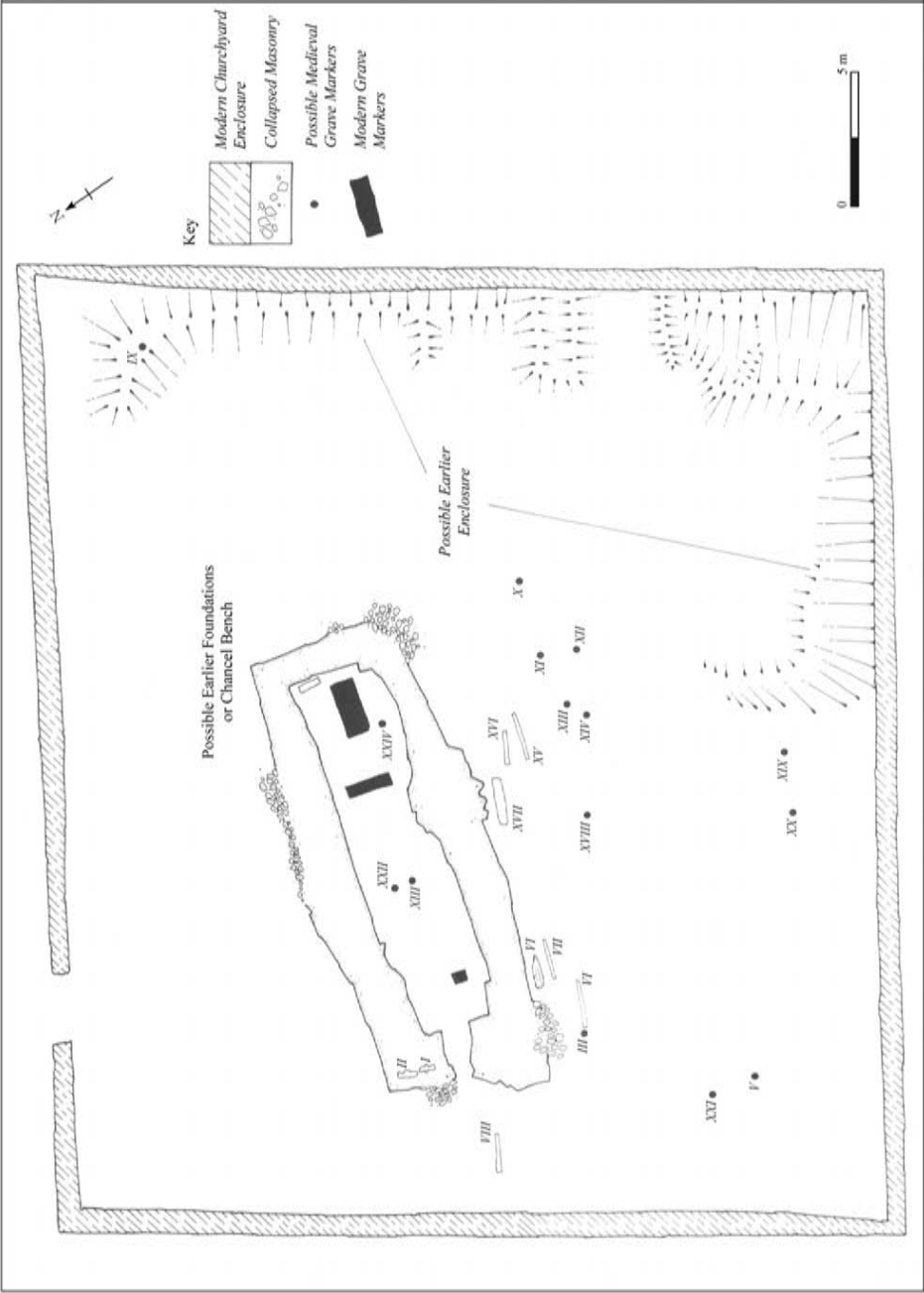
‘chancel’—which in fact is at the west! Also there are indications of an earlier enclosure, as well as a number of interesting monuments in the graveyard. Further non-invasive work should be carried out, and it is envisaged that this site could, and should, provide a major focus for this project, despite the logistical issues.

Five further sites were examined by means of plane-table survey (St Mary’s Bothen; Kirkaby, Westing; St John’s Colvadale (Illus. 25); St Mary’s, Framgord (Illus. 26); and Blue Mull (Illus. 27), and that at Framgord was extended to include ‘The Priests’ Hoose’ (Illus. 28). Full topographic surveys were undertaken at eight sites (all these except Blue Mull, together with St John’s Norwick; Crosskirk, Clibberswick; Gletna Kirk; and Kirk Knowe, Westing). The topographic survey has proved to be of considerable benefit when undertaken over a large-scale (for instance, at Kirkaby: Illus. 29) and certainly can give the visual impression of the wider context of individual sites. However, it is of lesser use where the areas recorded by total station were restricted; the plane-table surveys of those same sites are probably more informative, since they allow a greater amount of subjectivity and interpretation to enter into the record. But to restrict such a powerful survey technique to the immediate surroundings of any specific site is to leave that site out of its context, inhibiting further interpretation of that site, and it must be the aim of this project to undertake surveys on a larger scale. Indeed, some of the sites surveyed and reported upon here need further work (e.g. Framgord, Clibberswick). There is also further work to be undertaken, as noted above, not only in expanding some surveys but also in undertaking others (Colvadale, Blue Mull, and Uyea). In that way, we should come nearer understanding how the individuals who lived and worked around these sites for centuries in the past reacted to or respected their surroundings.

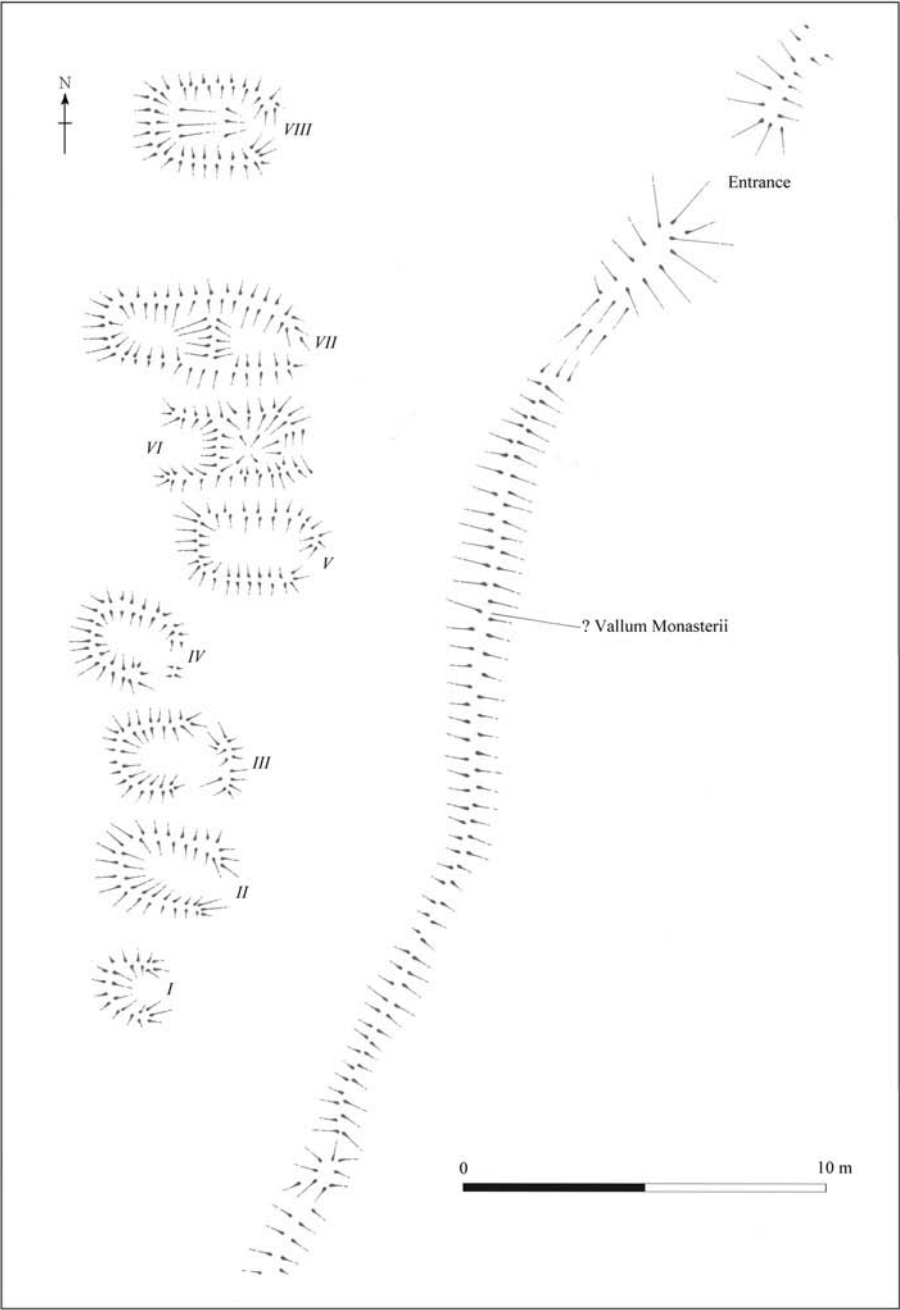
Several of these sites were considered to merit geophysical surveying. The 1999 fieldwork campaign of the Unst chapel-sites survey involved a number of high-resolution geophysical surveys that, by and large, have proved very successful (for example Kirkaby: Illus. 30). There can be no doubt that a number of the anomalies detected by both resistivity and gradiometry are of geological origin, but substantial quantities have the appearance of archaeological features. These now need to be confirmed by excavation in order to reinforce confidence in geophysical survey as a useful tool in the investigation of sites of this nature. Where the results of the individual surveys appear disappointing, the reasons for the apparent lack of success, on geophysical



Illus. 25 St. John's Colvadale, Unst, plane-table survey.



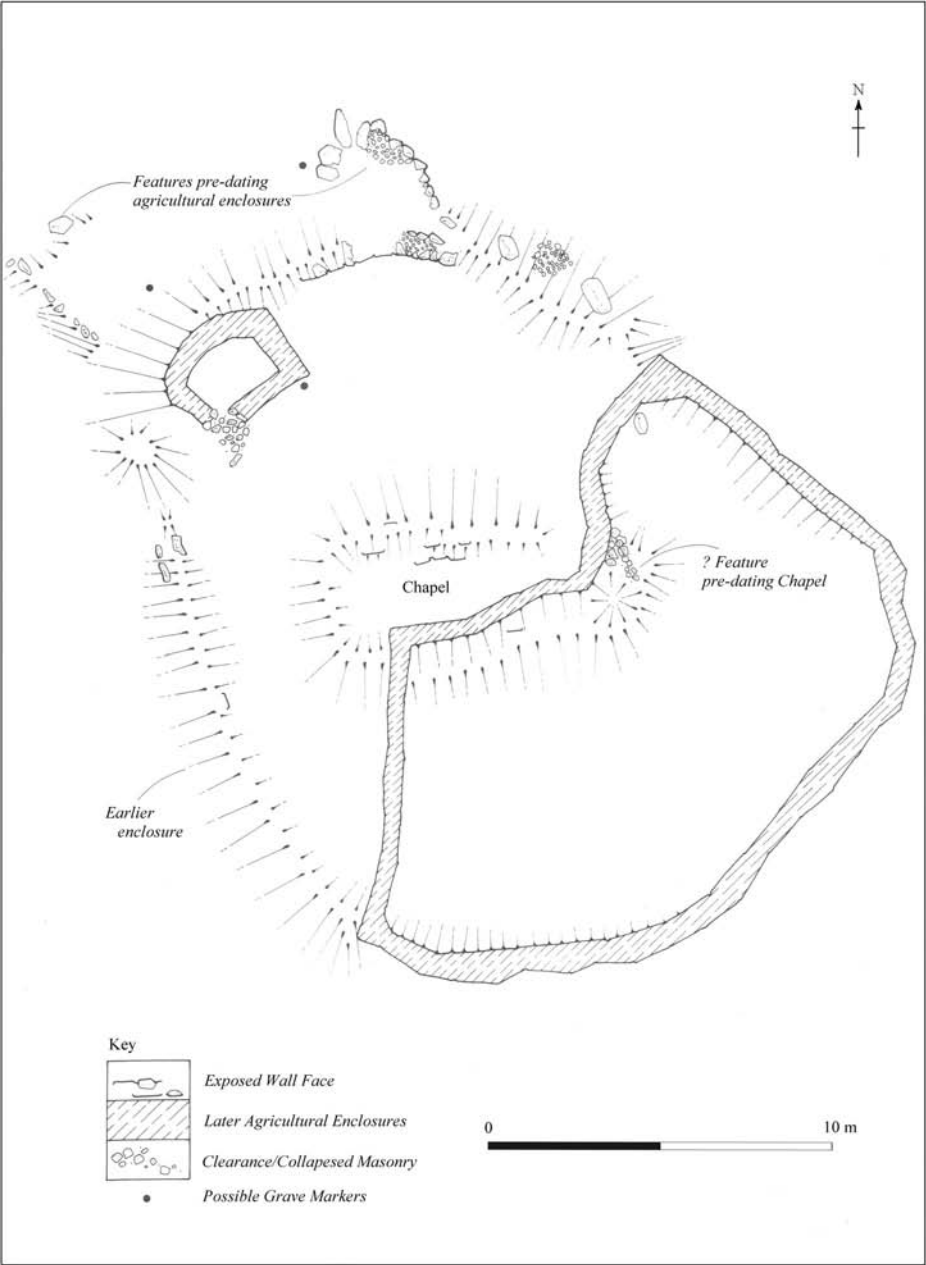
Illus. 26 St. Mary's Framgord, Unst, plane-table survey.



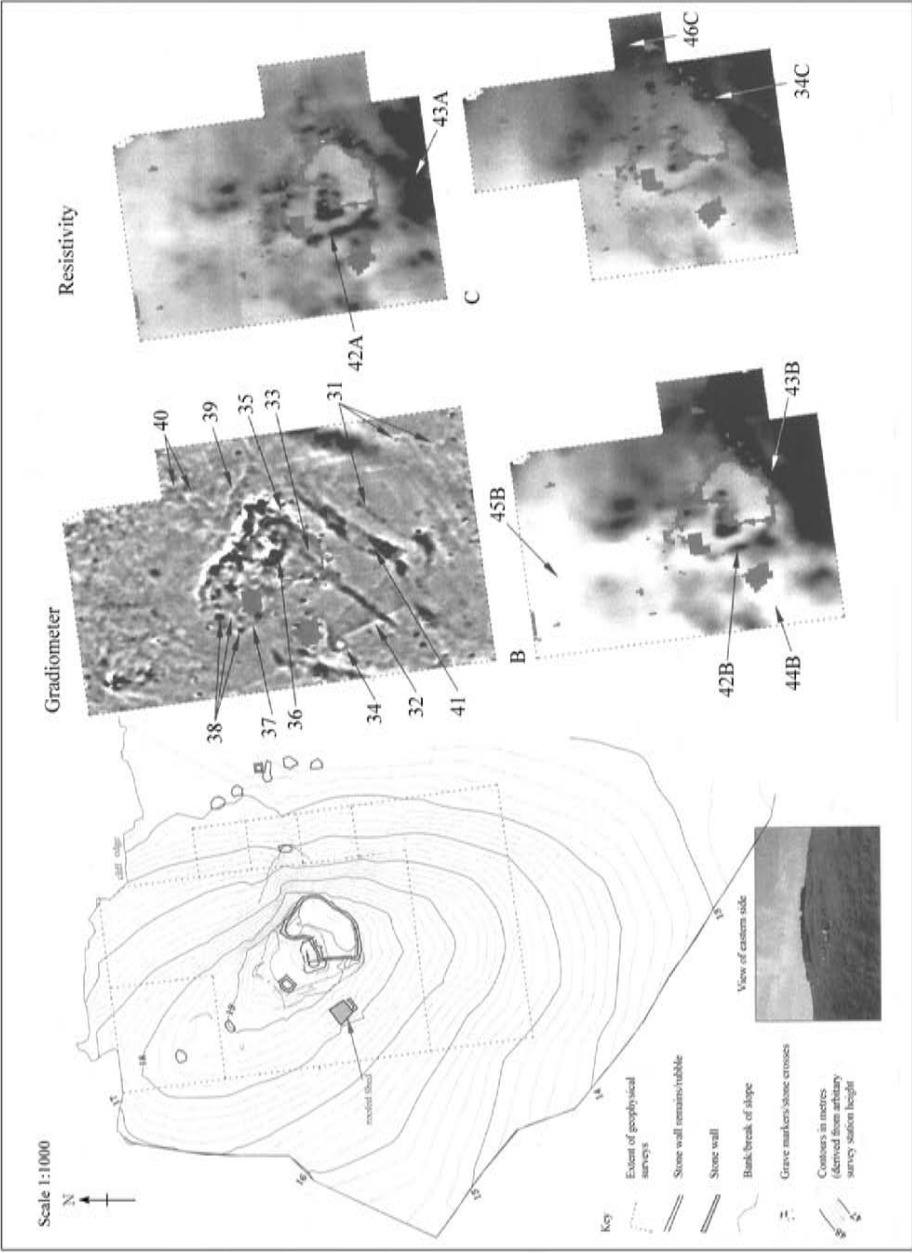
Illus. 27 Blue Mull, Unst, plane-table survey.



Illus. 28 Framford: 'The Priests Hoose', Unst, plane-table survey.



Illus. 29 Kirkaby, Unst, plane-table and topographic survey.



Illus. 30 Kirkcaldy, Unst, topographic and geophysical survey.

grounds, can be explained in terms of local geological conditions. In certain instances, such as at Kirk Knowe, the survey was in any case speculative and the lack of success had little to do with physics and geology, and rather the lack of tangible information around which to design a survey. Overall, however, there can be no doubt that our knowledge of the spatial extent and characteristics of several of the chapel-sites of Unst has been dramatically enhanced by the application of archaeological geophysics. However, some caution is recommended until the geophysical anomalies are proven to be an archaeological reality by subsequent fieldwork.

The report of this work (Brady & Johnson 2000), alongside the previous one (Brady & Johnson 1998), constitutes the completion of the majority of Phase I survey work as proposed by Morris & Brady (1998, 66–70). Aside from what has already been mentioned above, further survey work, in the form of standing building survey, has been proposed for St John's, Baliasta, St Olaf's, Lundawick, St Mary's, Framgord and Uyea Chapel; future seasons may well see this work undertaken. Other survey elements recommended, and which may be attempted, are more speculative. Underwater survey at the Kirk of Millyskara and geophysical survey on the island of Balta may be attempted at the same time as Phase II or Phase III work at other sites. Clearance of later agricultural overburden or collapsed walling is the main outstanding task from Phase I. This could clearly now be done at sites surveyed in this report where sufficient record now exists of later structures. The removal of agricultural enclosures at Kirkaby and Colvadale, as well as the clearance of collapsed masonry at Crosskirk, Gletna Kirk and St Mary's, Framgord, in advance of Phase II and Phase III work is now possible and desirable.

This survey of chapel-sites on Unst has now reached the stage at which a more interventionist approach needs to be designed, after completion of the remaining non-interventionist work outlined above. The staged, incremental approach to the study of these intriguing sites on Unst has been of considerable utility. The same approach is being adopted in relation to the neighbouring islands of Fetlar and Yell. It is intended that, while the work on Unst may progress under the umbrella of the Viking Unst Project, the parallel work (and certainly all that of a non-interventionist character) on the other two islands will also proceed to provide a broader perspective within the Shetland Chapel-sites Project. Just as it is important to see each individual chapel-site within its wider local context, and those of each island as a unified group, so

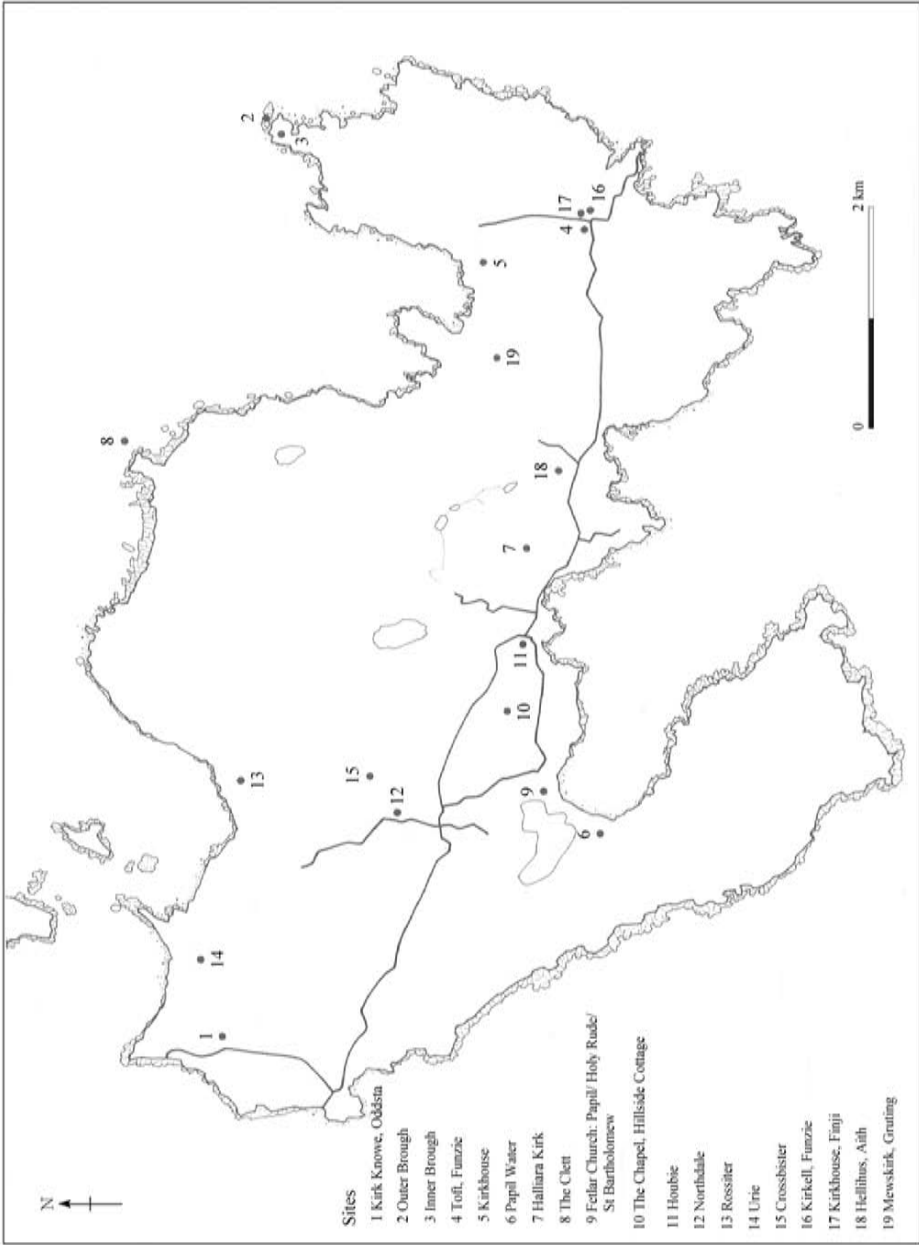
it is important to view them within the broader context of this group of islands, linked by the sea.

Fetlar Chapel-sites

The early phases of the work on Unst in 1997 and 1998 quickly led to the realisation that the island should not be seen in isolation, but that there was a need to place the Unst material in a wider context. At the least, it was felt that the examination of potential chapel-sites should be broadened to encompass all three main islands at the north of Shetland: Unst, Fetlar and Yell (Morris 2001, 69). To this end, in the first instance, Kevin Brady undertook in 1998 a desk-based study of the chapel-sites of Fetlar (Brady 1998). A total of nineteen potential sites for Fetlar was gleaned from the above sources that have some evidence to suggest a potential ecclesiastical connection (see Morris & Brady with Johnson 1999, 30 Illus. 6). However, the quality of the evidence varies greatly.

The next phase of walkover survey fieldwork by Morris and Brady took place in September 1999 (Brady & Morris 2000). This involved a basic field assessment of the sites identified from the desktop survey—indeed in many cases here identification on the ground has been the main problem! Unlike Unst, it seems that perhaps either agricultural practices may have removed the evidence of former chapels in several cases, or even that the tradition of the association of scattalds with chapels has given rise to the tradition of the existence of remains (Illus. 31: Fetlar Chapel-sites map). The results of this fieldwork will then determine the future direction of the chapel-sites project in this island.

The information accumulated about the chapel-sites of Fetlar during the 1999 survey has shown clearly the potential value of further, more intensive commitment to these ecclesiastical monuments. The results of the walkover survey have highlighted the sites where further work is feasible, and the authors argue that much of this work is desirable in the context of the developing Shetland Chapel-sites Project. The research potential and logistical aspects of each individual site have been thoroughly discussed in the report. Future work is envisaged as taking place in three phases, and could be approached incrementally over a number of field seasons. The following table (Table 4) summarises the conclusions presented in the report. This follows closely on the model



Illus. 31 Map of Fetlar chapel sites.

Table 4 Chapel sites on Fetlar

	PHASE I			PHASE II Trial excavation	PHASE III Area excavation	Potential	Feasibility
	Desktop	Survey	Clearance				
Kirk Knowe		/		/	/	High	Excellent
Outer Brough		/				High	Poor
Inner Brough		/	/	/		High	Low
Toft				/		Low	Poor
Kirkhouse		/		/	/	Very High	Excellent
Papil Water		/		/		High	Poor
Halliarra Kirk		/	/	/	/	Very High	Excellent
The Clett		/				High	Poor
Feltar Church	/	/?		/?		Unknown	Poor
The Chapel	/			/		Low	Poor
Houbie						Low	Poor
Northdale						Low	Poor
Rossiter	/	/				Unknown	Good
Urie	/	/				Unknown	Excellent
Crossbister						Low	Poor
Kirkell						Low	Poor
Kirkhouse						Low	Poor
Hellihus	/					Low	Poor
Mew skirk						Low	Poor

presented by Morris and Brady (1998, 66–70) and the earlier report should be consulted for a more detailed discussion of how the envisaged project design would develop.

As with Unst, the report produced (Brady & Morris 2000) presented recommendations for further optical and geophysical survey where sites are identifiable on the ground, as well as also evaluating the potential for excavation at promising sites, and a Project Design along the lines of the Unst project. As this table makes clear, the archaeological potential of the chapel-sites on Fetlar is not as remarkably high as those examined on Unst (Morris & Brady 1998; 67). It should be noted that of the 19 sites highlighted by Brady (1998) which were visited in the 1999 survey, only 13 sites have some scope for additional work as part of Phase I.

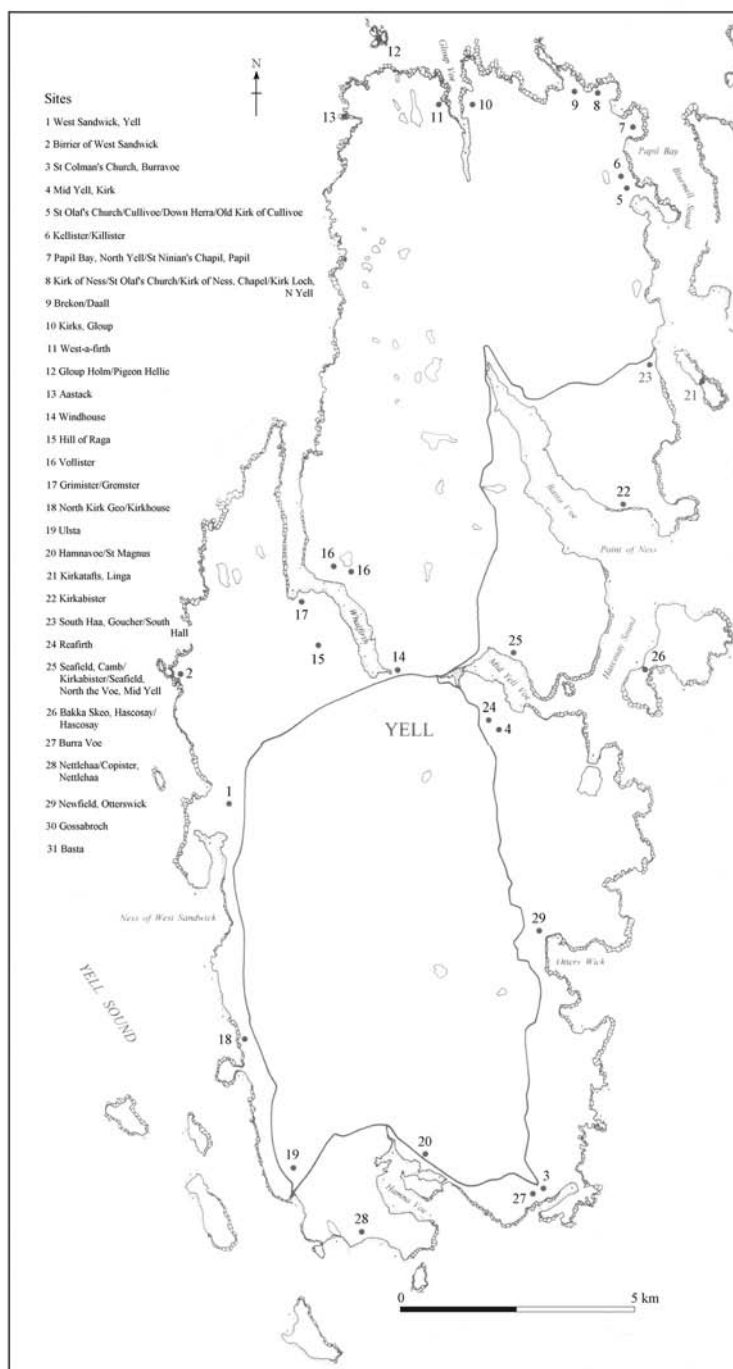
Further desktop survey may throw light on the ecclesiastical connections with particular sites or the antiquity of those connections. This information may be found through additional study of folk-tradition or official records. For the reasons outlined in detail in the report, such work could be carried out at Fetlar Church, the Chapel, Hillside, Rossiter, Urie and Hellihus. Any information thus gathered could lead to a second phase of work at these sites. Additional survey, both optical and geophysical, is recommended at eight sites: Kirk Knowe, the Inner Brough, Kirkhouse, Everland, Papil Water, Halliarra

Kirk (Illus. 32), Fetlar Church, Rossiter and Urie. Much of this work could be carried out in as little as a half day and several sites could be worked on simultaneously. It should also be noted that it might be impractical to survey at two additional sites, the Clett or the Outer Brough. The last aspect of Phase I would be the clearance of modern impediments at archaeological sites to aid survey or later excavation. This is recommended for two sites. At Toft, Funzie, this would entail clearing an agricultural dumping ground in a speculative attempt to locate a supposed chapel-site. At Halliara Kirk, this would involve the removal of a modern agricultural enclosure to allow the examination of the promising ruins below.

Small-scale, targeted excavation could be attempted in Phase II at eight sites. This would involve trial trenching to test specific questions where the ecclesiastical connection seems secure, for example at Kirkhouse, Everland or Halliara Kirk. This phase could also involve opening trenches to characterise certain topographic anomalies in the vicinity of apposite place-names, for example at Papil Water or the Chapel. This incremental strategy must remain fluid enough to incorporate any changes in a later phase necessitated by early results. Sites for which Phase II or III work cannot be envisaged at present may attain a clearer focus after work in Phase I. The culmination of the strategy outlined above would be the area excavation in Phase III of the most promising site(s) on Fetlar. Based upon our current knowledge, the sites, which clearly have the most potential for this kind of intensive investigation, are Kirk Knowe, Kirkhouse, Everland and Halliara Kirk.

Yell Chapel-Sites

Initially, for Yell and its adjacent islands and stacks, Kevin Brady identified from a further desk-based survey of similar sources in 1999, 31 sites to be investigated, of which 22 are supposed Medieval chapel and burial-grounds and three are alleged Norse monasteries (Brady, 2000a). As with Fetlar, the walkover survey by Morris and Brady in late September 1999 and September 2000 indicated that some remain simply as place-names of adjacent farms. Others are now no longer recognisable (even though the location is known), while yet others remain which can be investigated further will be encountered. Two additional sites were brought to their attention during work on the island, which gave a total of 33 sites to be examined (Illus. 33).



Illus. 33 Map of Yell chapel sites.

In common with the previous chapel-site surveys conducted by VESARP in Unst and Fetlar, the research potential and logistical aspects of each individual site has been thoroughly discussed in the report (Brady 2000b). The following table (Table 5) summarises the conclusions presented there. This follows closely on the previous model.

The archaeological potential of the chapel-sites on Yell is high and comparable with Unst. However, this positive fact is somewhat tempered by the logistical unfeasibility of conducting work at a large number of sites. West Sandwick (Site 1 above), Kirk of Ness (Site 8 above), Reafirth (Site 24 above) and others have a high potential for Medieval remains still extant but cannot be further examined due to their being in continued use as places of burial. Birrier of West Sandwick (Site 2 above) and Hascosay (Site 26 above) are, again, potentially very interesting in terms of Medieval ecclesiastical foundations, but difficulty of access is likely to preclude large-scale work at these sites. As discussed below, further work can be planned at most sites, however limited that work may have to be.

A total of 23 sites has some scope for additional work as part of Phase I. Further desktop study may throw light on the traditions or place-names at Kirkcatafts (Site 21), Neapabacks (Site 32) and Fealykirk (Site 33). Any relevant information may help lead any of these sites into Phase II. The stack/islet sites of Birrier (Site 2), Pigeon Hellie (Site 12) and Aastack (Site 13) may be plotted from aerial photographs, if such exist. Additional survey, both optical and geophysical, is recommended at eighteen sites: West Sandwick (Site 1); Birrier (Site 2); St Olaf's, Cullivoe (Site 5); Papil Bay (Site 7); Kirk of Ness (Site 8); Kirks, Gloup (Site 10); West-a-firth (Site 11); Windhouse (Site 14); Vollister (Site 16); Grimister (Site 17) (Illus. 34); Ulsta (Site 19); Kirkabister (Site 22); South Haa, Gutcher (Site 23); Seafield (Site 25); Hascosay (Site 26); Burravoe (Site 27); Nettlehaa (Site 28); and Newfield (Site 29). Much of the work envisaged could be carried out at these sites in as little as half a day and several sites could be worked on simultaneously. It may not be feasible to work on some of these sites. Problems of access (see Sites 2 and 7 above for the differing reasons) and sensitivity (see Site 24, for example) may preclude any further work at such sites. The last aspect of Phase I work, the clearance of the site of tumble/undergrowth to ascertain the extent of the archaeology and its relevance to the project, only applies at one site (Site 28).

Small-scale, targeted excavation could be attempted at 12 sites in Phase II. This would involve trial trenching to test specific questions where the

Table 5 Chapel sites on Yell

Site	PHASE I		PHASE II Trial excavation	PHASE III Area excavation	Potential	Feasibility
	Desktop	Survey Clearance				
1. West Sandwick		/			High	Low
2. Birrier	/	/			High	N/a
3. St Colman's					None	N/a
4. Mid Yell					None	N/a
5. St.Olaf's, Cullivoe		/			None	N/a
6. Kellister					None	Low
7. Papil Bay		/	/		High	Low
8. St.Olaf's, Ness		/			High	Low
9. Brekon					Low	High
10. Kirks, Gloup		/	/		Low	Low
11. West-a-firth		/			Moderate	Low
12. Pigeon Hellie	/				Unknown	Low
13. Aastack	/				Unknown	High
14. Windhouse		/	/		Unknown	Low
15. Hill of Raga					None	Low
16. Vollister		/	/		Moderate	Low
17. Grimister		/	/	/	High	High
18. Kirkhouse					High	N/a
19. Ulsta		/	/	/	High	Low
20. St. Magnus					Unknown	High
21. Kirkatafts	/				Low	Low
22. Kirkabister		/	/	/	High	High
23. South Haa		/			Unknown	Low
24. Reafirth					None	N/a
25. Seafield		/	/	/	High	High
26. Bakka Skeo		/	/		High	Low
27. Burravoe		/	/		Unknown	High
28. Nettlehaa		/	/		Unknown	High
29. Otterswick		/	/		Unknown	High
30. Gossabroch					None	N/a
31. Basta					None	N/a
32. Neapabacks	/				Low	High
33. Fealy	/				Low	High

ecclesiastical connection seems secure, for example at Seafield (Site 25) or Hascosay (Site 26). This phase should also be used as an opportunity to test the supposed ecclesiastical connection at a number of sites where there is an apparent, tangible focus for an interventionist approach. Dependent upon results from Phase I work in some cases, targeted excavation should be profitable at: Papil Bay (Site 7); Kirks, Gloup (Site 10); Windhouse (Site 14); Vollister (Site 16); Grimister (Site 17); Ulsta (Site 19); Kirkabister (Site 22); Burravoe (Site 27); Nettlehaa (Site 28); and Newfield, Otterswick (Site 29). It should be remembered that this incremental strategy should remain sufficiently fluid to allow other sites to be examined should additional information regarding them come to light.

The culmination of the strategy outlined above, and in common with previous proposals by VESARP in the Shetland Chapel-sites Survey Project, would be the large-scale, area excavation of the most promising sites on Yell in Phase III. Perhaps the sites that offer the most encouragement for large-scale work in Phase III are those at Ulsta (Site 19) and Seafield (Site 25). The reasons for the inclusion of these two differ markedly. The site at Ulsta has been badly affected by the cutting of a road through it and agricultural improvements. Work here would almost be in a 'rescue' context where any information that was retrieved would add to the record as the site degrades. The site at Seafield seems little disturbed although there is obvious signs of later agricultural activity around and over the site. This site should be examined as perhaps the best surviving chapel-site on the island which is located in a position which is logistically feasible to work on. The likelihood of a site pre-dating the chapel directly underneath also argues for examination of this site. The apparent palimpsest at this spot may shed light on the developing structure of the church in these northern isles of the archipelago.

Conclusion

The work described above continues the project begun in 1997 on Unst alone. It has shown the value of continued, intensive, non-intrusive survey work at various levels at the sites on that island. This approach could now be replicated on each of the other two islands. However, although at this stage the material from Fetlar seems less promising overall than that from both Unst and Yell, it is clear that in all three islands there are a number of sites that could benefit from a more interventionist approach, following such surveys. Ultimately, the extent to which the survey-work can be followed up will depend upon funding opportunities. At present, development of the work in Unst through the 'Viking Unst Project' seems most likely, but the archaeological promise of all three islands—and the benefit of taking the broader contextual view—should be borne in mind.

In the meantime, further work on two sites away from these three islands has taken place, and the papers and reports elsewhere describe the work undertaken at St Ninian's Isle Dunrossness and Brei Holm, Papa Stour (Barrowman 2003; Brady 2002). Although it is now over 30 years since the author—like Barbara Crawford—was first involved

in the fascinating archaeology and history of the ‘Northern Isles’, the appetite for more is regularly whetted by any new investigations undertaken. The ‘Shetland Chapel-sites Project’ has certainly proved fascinating in its initial phases, and it is to be hoped that further work will be enabled on at least some of these sites—which are well-known to Barbara—or should now be!

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PART THREE

ARCHAEOLOGY, MATERIAL CULTURE AND SETTLEMENT

NORWICK: SHETLAND'S FIRST VIKING SETTLEMENT?

Beverley Ballin Smith

Introduction

In 2003 archaeological remains came to light during the excavation of an extension to the existing graveyard at Norwick, Unst in Shetland. Analysis of the structural elements, samples and artefacts revealed that some of the settlement was early Viking in date. The picture is complicated: firstly, because the Viking structures developed over a settlement of Iron Age date; and secondly, a medieval chapel and churchyard was later constructed on top of the Viking buildings. This stratigraphic complexity was not fully revealed or excavated due to the constraints of the extent of the graveyard, and the available time. The results of the excavation will be published in 2007 (Ballin Smith forthcoming a), but this paper presents the preliminary conclusions and the significance of the site and its artefactual assemblage for Viking colonisation of the Shetland and the west.

The early history of the settlement of the site

Norwick lies on the east coast, but towards the north-east corner of Unst, the most northerly of the Shetland Islands (Illus. 35 see also location on Illus. 47). The area of Norwick is dominated by the wide sandy bay of Nor Wick, and is sheltered from all but the easterly winds by a prominent headland to the north, the Ward of Norwick and Housi Field to the west, and the Hill of Clibberswick to the south. In approaching the island from the sea, a mere two days sail from Norway, Nor Wick bay would have offered one of the best landing places in the island, with that of Sand Wick bay to the south. A freshwater stream, the Burn of Norwick, courses through a shallow valley known as Norwick Meadow leading to the open sea. A thousand years or more ago this low-lying area was probably underwater and formed part of Nor Wick bay as the landscape features on either side of the valley are now inland cliffs. Repeated accumulation of windblown sand and natural silting

will have filled in the head of the bay and covered the remains of early settlement in the area.

The Iron Age occupants of Norwick built their stone houses, most likely with the addition of a broch, on the south side of the bay. Here the contours of the landscape are less steep, there is easy access to the shore and there are good views across the bay. It is highly probable that the native Iron Age people also developed their settlement close to the most fertile soils of the area. Apart from its locational aspects with the possibility of sea-borne communications, Norwick has much to offer in the form of natural resources, and especially those of geology. Boulders along part of Nor Wick bay were used for construction of buildings with cobbles¹ and pebbles for hand tools. The occurrence of hard rocks (granites and schists) to the north and west, and the softer steatites and serpentines to the south provided much geological variety that was valuable for the day-to-day existence of the local people. These same resources would have been extremely attractive later to Viking settlers from the east.

Although there is firm evidence of Iron Age buildings at Norwick, the form of that occupation is uncertain. A glimpse of the settlement was only seen in a deep section cut close to the south wall of the existing graveyard (Illus. 36). Some features identified as walls, a stone floor, and layers of ash, middens and occupation debris are all that were revealed. What is important is that only a small part of the settlement was removed by the extension to the graveyard, as most appears to lie to the north under the prominent mound of the oldest part of the graveyard and the Chapel of St. John (see Morris, this volume). It is quite likely that more Iron Age structures or middens lie to the east under an adjacent mound. The Iron Age settlement was possibly larger and more extensive than we presently have evidence for it, and although not proven, a broch may lie at its heart. A single radiocarbon date (SUERC-8935) from carbonised food deposits from a steatite vessel derived from the structures exposed in section, indicates a date range of 2410 ± 35 BP (590–390 cal BC).² However, the occupation of the settlement may be as early as 770 cal BC (see Table 6).

¹ A cobble is a stone defined as being larger than 64 mm but smaller than 256 mm (Gillespie, M. R. and Styles, M. T. 1999 British Geological Survey Rock Classification Scheme, Volume 1 Classification of igneous rocks (3rd ed.) Keyworth: BSG/NERC. Figure 3, 29). <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/bgsrscs/docs/Igneous.pdf>

² The BP (before present date) is calibrated using OxCal v.3.9 to produce a Cal BC date.

Table 6 Radiocarbon dates from Norwick (Ballin Smith)

Lab. No	Description	Sample	Dates Bp $\pm$ 1 Σ	Calibrated Dates $\pm$ 2 Σ
SUERC-8929	Sample 7	Carbonised monocot stems	1245 $\pm$ 35BP	cal AD 670–880
SUERC-8930	Sample 20	Carbonised grain <i>Hordeum</i> vulgare sl	1260 $\pm$ 35 BP	cal AD 660–870
SUERC-8931	Sample 22	Carbonised grain <i>Hordeum</i> <i>vulgare</i> sl	1200 $\pm$ 35 BP	cal AD 690–750 (10.2%) cal AD 760–900 (82.5%) cal AD 920–950 (2.7%)
SUERC-8936	Sample 599	Carbonised food deposits	1290 $\pm$ 35 BP	cal AD 650–780 (93.8%) cal AD 790–810 (1.6%)
SUERC-8935	Sample 557	Carbonised food deposits	2410 $\pm$ 35 BP	750–680 (14.2%) cal BC 670–640 (3.7%) cal BC 590–390 (77.5%) cal BC

Although the settlement has an Early Iron Age date, we have no evidence to indicate how long it lasted. We do know that the occupation continued into the early centuries AD from the dating of a native British brooch. A bronze Nauheim Derivative brooch, a common find in southern England, with a general date range spanning the first centuries BC into the first century AD (see Hattatt 1985, 20 and Fig 4) came from the Iron Age levels. This is the most northerly example of this type of brooch found in the British Isles, and was possibly brought to Norwick during or slightly after the first century AD.

What is interesting, in the light of succeeding events, is that there is no evidence of later Iron Age or Pictish occupation of the site in the area of the excavation, as would have been expected. However, this does not mean that the native Iron Age or Picts entirely disappeared from the archaeological record at Norwick. They could have moved

off the settlement mound but continued to live in the vicinity of it. As at Howe, a complex Iron Age settlement site near Stromness on Orkney, it is quite possible that Pictish buildings moved around the existing settlement mound over time (Ballin Smith 1994). Another fact which has to be taken into consideration when looking for evidence of the Late Iron Age is the presence of a significant accumulation of blown sand across the settlement mound. Deposits of sand up to 0.75 metres in depth covered the Early and Middle Iron Age structures exposed below the graveyard wall. This depth of sand, the result of a single or several blown-sand events, must have had catastrophic implications for the viability of settlement in the area. Not only were the buildings covered, but the head of Nor Wick bay may have been gradually filled in by blown sand. More importantly, fields are likely to have been buried, crops devastated, and available grazing for sheep and cattle much reduced. For Norwick there may have been a hiatus or a gradual running down of the settlement. Indeed it is highly likely that the Iron Age settlement was abandoned in the first few centuries AD with the inhabitants moving to a sand-free area and beginning life anew. These events are not unusual and have occurred throughout the history of the Northern Isles, other examples being the burial of the Neolithic settlement of Skara Brae, Orkney and the burial of medieval/post-medieval buildings at Grutness (Smith 1982) and at Bru in Dunrossness, Shetland (Bigelow pers.comm.).

The evidence for Viking occupation

During the latter half of the first millennium AD the sand-covered mound of the Iron Age settlement became the focus for a new occupation. Seaborne Vikings travelling from the east, from the western parts of southern Norway, arrived at Norwick, built their houses and settled. Was this by chance or design? It is possible that the position of the Viking settlement owed much to the location of the Iron Age structures, which may have been used as a quarry for building-stone. Norwick was a prime building site, in a slightly elevated but good location, with excellent resources nearby and a suitable beach for landing boats. There is evidence that the Iron Age stratigraphy was disrupted by the new settlers, as both Iron Age and Viking pottery were found together in some areas of the site.

The evidence for the Viking settlement was noted during the removal of topsoil from the area intended to be the graveyard extension

at Norwick, i.e. immediately south of the old graveyard. In an area covering 40 by 14 metres the remains of two, three, or possibly four structures were investigated by archaeological evaluation and excavation (Illus. 37). The main structural elements of the buildings that survived included hearths (one, a long hearth), stone wall-footings and paths. In addition, two main drains (one with side branches) had been constructed which led south off the settlement mound. Another drain was also excavated which is probably much later in date as it coursed east-west through the Viking occupation and lay parallel to the old graveyard wall. A fourth drain at the west side of the site may have also served as a flue for a small workshop. Each drain was lined with stone, capped by flat stones, and was dug into the blown sand beneath the settlement. A broad but slightly curved arrangement of large stones in the centre of the excavation is likely to have served as the foundation for a turf wall for one of the houses. The four hearths that were investigated were complex with much ash, and in one example at least, there were several phases of use. Surrounding many of these features were floor deposits, burnt layers and sandy midden material. Some of these deposits may have been due to the general occupation of the structures but other deposits may have been derived from their construction, from possibly turf walls and thatched roofs. Due to the circumstances of evidence recovery (see Ballin Smith forthcoming a) and of later disturbance including stone robbing, it is not possible to determine with certainty the form and internal organisation of the buildings or the layout of the settlement, or indeed their phasing. Like the preceding Iron Age structures a considerable percentage of the exposed structures are likely to be preserved underneath the graveyard mound, and possibly to its immediate north and north-east.

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the poor preservation of structures, the artefactual assemblage associated with them is early Viking in date, as are the radiocarbon dates (see below). Recent archaeological work in Shetland from excavation of Viking levels at Old Scatness, Dunrossness, and the continuation of the *Viking Unst Project* will hopefully fill in some of the historical background and the structural detail missing from the Norwick settlement. As highlighted by Batey (forthcoming) much of the newly excavated evidence from other sites is similar to, but better preserved than, that revealed at Norwick. It is also hoped that radiocarbon dates from their well-stratified deposits and artefacts will provide a good comparison.

The artefactual evidence from the Viking levels at Norwick gives us a picture of activities and contact that is markedly different from that

accepted as occurring at other Shetland Viking settlement sites such as Jarlshof³ in the South Mainland, and Underhoull and Sandwick on Unst, which are all later in date. The two most prolific artefact categories found at Norwick are those made of steatite such as vessels, bakestones and weights, and coarse-tempered, handmade pottery which was locally manufactured. Small iron objects including knives, a wide variety of stone tools, gaming pieces, environmental samples of animal bone, bird bone, and some fish; and samples of grain and fuel, complete the assemblage range.

The identification of the site as being early Viking in date is based partly on the evidence of the radiocarbon dates and also on the steatite assemblage (see Forster forthcoming). The steatite assemblage with its range of specific vessel types and other objects is very rare in Britain. It has an unusually high percentage of vessels of Norwegian origin (made from Norwegian steatite) compared to those made from local Shetland sources. Forster describes the Norwick assemblage as exceptional and suggests that the steatite vessels are morphologically early and therefore indicative of a primary settlement. She also noted that many of the Norwegian steatite vessels are well-used, thus demonstrating their importance in domestic activities.

It is quite clear from her analyses that the exploitation of local steatite resources on the nearby Hill of Clibberswick did take place during the life of the Viking settlement, as it did during the Iron Age period. However, this resource was not used for the manufacture of indigenous forms of Shetland steatite vessels at Norwick, unlike at later settlement sites, as square-sided vessels do not appear in the artefact assemblage. In general, the development of indigenous vessels did not take place on Shetland until the middle of the tenth century (*ibid.*). The settlement at Norwick must therefore predate AD 950 due to the total absence of these local square-sided vessel forms at the site. In addition to this, Forster also suggested that the establishment and occupation of the settlement must have had a narrow time frame due to the absence of later Norse and Medieval vessel types in the steatite assemblage.

The excavation of the settlement also produced a mixed but relatively large assemblage of unstratified pottery, much of it using steatite with other local rocks as temper. Some of the pottery was distinctly Iron

³ It is quite possible that there are contemporary horizons at Jarlshof (C. Batey, pers. comm.).

Age in form, but the majority was identified as Viking (Ballin Smith forthcoming b), but there were no rims or other sherds that indicated a later Iron Age presence. The assemblage is important as approximately 380 pieces are sherds from locally manufactured Viking pots. They are distinguished from the Iron Age wares found at the site by their generally poor manufacture, their inconsistent rim morphology, their general lack of surface finishing and their overall naivety. The high percentage of steatite used in the manufacture of many of the pots indicates not only the use of local steatite resources but the objective of producing a vessel that resembled a steatite one. There are also examples of inturned rims in the assemblage which suggest that globular pots were made. Comparable vessels forms are dated to around the ninth century in Scandinavia.

The problem in analysing this assemblage lay not in the sherds themselves but in the lack of comparative assemblages from other sites, and from sites of early Viking date. Many of the comparable sites are either aceramic or, if present, the pottery has been dated later than the occupation of the Viking settlement at Norwick. As with the Norwick steatite assemblage, there is no evidence that the pottery imitated the forms of later steatite square or four-sided vessels seen at Jarlshof and South Sandwick in Unst, dated to the early twelfth century, or late Norse period. The Norwick pottery assemblage is thus very important and exceedingly rare, and further analysis and research will be carried out on it.

The dating of the Viking occupation

The analyses of the steatite and pottery assemblages have indicated an early Viking date for the site but carbonised environmental samples were submitted for independent radiocarbon dating. One sample was the burnt food deposits from the interior surface of an imported Norwegian steatite vessel (sample 599) found in or beside a hearth in one of the buildings in the middle part of the excavated area. The other dated samples were barley grain from deposits beside the long hearth in the northern part of the site (sample 22), and from the base of the drain/flue in the same area of the settlement (sample 20). Sample 7, of monocot stems, was derived from the hearth and floor areas of the east part of the site. The results were surprising.

Some time between cal AD 650 and 880 but possibly not much later than cal AD 900 there is firm evidence of established Viking occupation at Norwick (see Table 6 for radiocarbon dates). The settlement is clearly early, with the dates indicating occupation well before the late eighth century, and possibly as much as a century before. It is possible from the evidence of the dates to think of a time span of a minimum of 110 years to 250 years for the settlement, with its established fields, crops and domestic buildings. The interesting fact about the dates is that there is very good correlation for the establishment and use of the settlement sometime between cal AD 650–670 to cal AD 780–880. In fact, sample 599 from the imported steatite vessel produced the earliest date for the Viking settlement. Sample 22 from beside the long hearth produced a slightly later but overlapping date. This sample indicated that the site was still occupied between cal AD 760 to as late as cal AD 900. The long hearth was a complex feature and this sample probably derived from deposits near the top of it and thus indicating its later use.

The importance of the radiocarbon dates lies in their consistency and their indication of the early establishment and use of this site by Viking incomers. They also confirm the early date of the settlement at Norwick as indicated by the steatite and pottery assemblages. Forster (above) suggested that the occupation ceased prior to AD 950, and the radiocarbon dates do not contradict this. However, the Norwick dates for early Viking settlement are not unique in Shetland as Viking levels have been found recently within a Middle Iron Age wheelhouse at Old Scatness, Dunrossness, dated to cal AD 663–890 (Bond *et al.* forthcoming; Batey forthcoming). Until the excavation of these sites it was noted that ‘No traces of settlement survive in the north and west of Scotland until well on into the ninth century’ (Wilson 1992, 98). The importance of Norwick, considering the general paucity of early Viking settlement in the British Isles, cannot therefore be over stated. It is hoped that the *Viking Unst Project* may have much to add on the establishment and dating of similar settlement sites in Unst in future years.

The Nature of the Viking occupation

From the evidence of the artefacts and the structural elements, the settlement at Norwick appears to have been designed (its location, drains and building layout), permanent (hearths, foundations and drains

constructed in stone) and of fairly long duration (up to 250 years). Could it therefore be described as a primary settlement as suggested by Forster (forthcoming)? Batey (forthcoming) suggests that the presence of Viking raiding parties (see Morris 1998, 83) in the Northern Isles is known prior to the early to mid ninth century, but was Norwick a base for such activities?

The island of Unst is one of the nearest landfalls in the British Isles to the homelands of traders or scouts from south and west Norway. It is quite possible that they would, by design or chance, have travelled and landed on the island, sailed around it and around the rest of the Shetland Islands. In the continental lands bordering the North Sea area the period *c.* AD 550 to 800 is known as the *Folkevandringtid* (The Migration Period). In different countries it is also known as the late Germanic Iron Age, the Anglo-Saxon or the Merovingian periods. Across Scandinavia and the North Sea basin this was a period of 'international' contact, trade, great artistry, uncertainty and much change (Rud 1979). The spread of the Christian missionary Church occurred at the same time, and it is likely that Shetland, and perhaps Unst in particular, played a significant part in seaborne activities across the northern part of the North Sea. However, until the discovery and excavation of the Norwick settlement, the overseas contact prior to the official beginning of the Viking period in Britain from AD 793 (AD 800 in Scandinavia), has been somewhat lacking in evidence and support. A good century before the raid on Lindisfarne (Crawford 1987, 39) there is evidence to indicate that settlers from Norway had occupied Norwick, one of the best settlement sites on the east coast of Unst, and built a permanent settlement there, perhaps one of the primary Viking sites. But before AD 950, but most likely around AD 900, they had moved elsewhere.

In the 100-year to 250-year lifespan of the Norwick settlement significant changes took place. The landscape was re-explored and renamed as many of the present day topographic names in Unst bear Scandinavian names (Waugh 1991). A new style of architecture was introduced, that of the long house, different building traditions were established and steatite cooking vessels were imported, brought in seaworthy vessels from the east. It is difficult to argue with certainty that Norwick became a base for Viking raiders, even though it had much to offer for those setting off to explore the cultural landscapes of Britain. The evidence points to a more settled existence for its inhabitants, with fishing, weaving, the playing of games, making pottery, cultivating

crops and raising domesticated animals being some of the activities that took place there.

The big questions that occupy archaeologists and historians concerning the start of the Viking period can be looked at from the evidence from Norwick. It would seem likely that the landscape the Vikings came to around Nor Wick was unoccupied due to the depth of blown sand and the lack of evidence for the native Late Iron Age/Picts on the site. Did the Vikings come as invaders or, as Brian Smith (2001) would like to see them, as killers? At Norwick they may have been sadly disappointed, and instead built a few houses from which to plan future travels and raids. Other important questions concern the dating of the establishment of the settlement and of the pottery. Can this Norwick settlement with its evidence of imported artefacts and its radiocarbon dates be described as Viking? The cultural evidence is Viking but the dates are clearly early. And what of the pottery? This site was not aceramic but more scientific research and comparative dating into its pottery assemblage is needed. It will also be important to compare the dating of this occupation site with the dates of other early Viking sites, and with Viking Age pagan and Christian graves with early dates found in the Northern and Western Isles, to understand the diversity and nature of cultural contact in the seventh to ninth centuries.

The questions that will arise about the site are more than can be anticipated here. The research into Norwick and other sites on Unst will continue and it is to be hoped that additional, and better preserved evidence will come to light at other excavations for early Viking settlement. Today Norwick stands alone: it is an important site for the evidence it has yielded, but for now—it must be described as Shetland's first Viking settlement.

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THE PIRATE FISHERMEN: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF A MEDIEVAL MARITIME SOCIETY

James H. Barrett

Introduction

The earldom of Orkney, a semi-independent principality based in the archipelagos of Orkney and Shetland off northern Scotland, is one of the dark horses of late Viking Age and early medieval history. Although illuminated by *Orkneyinga saga* and incidental details recorded in skaldic verse and other sources, our knowledge of its history compares unfavourably with Ireland, England, Iceland and (to a lesser degree) also Norway and Scotland. Nevertheless, when Orkney does appear on the historical radar—during Earl Sigurd Hlodvisson's Irish campaign of 1014 for example (Hudson 2005, 96–98)—it has the appearance of significant wealth and power. In addition to history, archaeology and architecture contribute to this impression. Two well-known examples will suffice to set the scene. The Skaill hoard deposited in Orkney around AD 950 is among the largest known in Scandinavia (Graham-Campbell 1993, 180). Moreover, the twelfth-century phases of St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney, were comparable in ambition to major contemporary building projects in Scandinavia and lowland Scotland (Cambridge 1988, 122–24).

Given these observations, the earldom *has* often been treated as exceptionally wealthy and powerful—a status typically attributed to its geographical position at the hub of maritime traffic between the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the North Atlantic (Small 1968, 5; Wilson 1976, 110–111; Kaland 1982, 93–4; Morris 1985, 233–34; Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 62). It remains to be established, however, exactly how this could have worked. What political economy could turn a small and largely rural community on the edge of medieval Europe into a wealthy and semi-independent society? This is a question which Barbara Crawford and her former students have done much to illuminate (for example Crawford 1987, 134–36; Macgregor & Crawford 1987; Crawford 1995; Williams 2004), and it is hoped that the present paper is thus an appropriate tribute to her scholarship.

To address the issue of the earldom's political economy it is necessary to ask two fundamental questions. Firstly, was Orkney really as wealthy as is sometimes assumed? Secondly, if so, what were the social and economic bases of this wealth? This paper will attempt to answer these questions, and in so doing implicitly suggest a number of factors which may also prove illuminating in the context of other comparable maritime principalities.

Both historical and archaeological sources must be combined in order to answer the questions posed. The most important of the former is *Orkneyinga saga* itself, which was composed around AD 1200 and updated early in the thirteenth century. Sagas differ widely in their reliability, but this account of the earls of Orkney was clearly written with historical intent (Jesch 1992, 1996). Its treatment of twelfth-century events is considered broadly reliable and some of its eleventh-century details can also be corroborated in contemporary sources such as the Irish annals (see Etchingham 2001; Hudson 2005) and Adam of Bremen's *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* (Tschan 2002). A diverse collection of other historical sources will also be considered where relevant. Given the paucity of material directly related to the earldom, however, analogies will sometimes need to be drawn (with caution) from sources beyond the chronological and geographical boundaries of the study.

The archaeological evidence is equally diverse. It includes obvious categories like silver hoards and monumental architecture, but also less tangible sources such as fish bones, cereal grains and the chemistry of human bone. In some instances the material culture corroborates the historical evidence. In other cases, archaeology allows one to document trends that are absent from, poorly represented in, or even misrepresented by the extant text-based sources. It is a particularly important corrective to the temptation to extrapolate 'traditional' patterns of the comparatively recent past into the Viking Age and early Middle Ages.

The chronological range of this study is mainly the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the period for which *Orkneyinga saga* can be considered most historical. By the early eleventh century the existence of the earldom is historically unambiguous.¹ Conversely, by the end of the twelfth century Orcadian independence had begun to decline in the

¹ Based on Earl Sigurd Hlodvisson's presence in Ireland noted above, which is known from the contemporary *Annals of Ulster* (MacAirt & MacNiocaill 1983, 447) in addition to late sources such as *Orkneyinga saga*.

face of Norwegian and Scottish expansionism (Crawford 1985; Imsen 2003; McDonald 2003, 97–100). The paper's coverage will occasionally be extended in time, however, in order to include the evidence of tenth-century silver hoards and to facilitate consideration of later medieval and post-medieval analogies. Its geographical boundaries are more fluid, given the shifting spheres of activity of the earls and their subjects through time.²

Wealth as Power and Power as Wealth

In order to decide whether the earldom of Orkney was actually wealthy one must first ask what this means and how it might be measured. Wealth in general can be defined as the means of production. But what were the means of production in Atlantic Scotland (the Northern and Western Isles and adjacent mainland) in the eleventh and twelfth centuries? A list can never be definitive, and changes in emphasis occurred through time as institutions such as currency and regular taxation became established (Andersen 1991; Williams 2004). Nevertheless, archaeological evidence, saga evidence and later sources (particularly rentals) indicate the wide range of things that might fall into this broad category. These are considered in detail below, but important examples included precious metals (as bullion, coinage or objects), wood (particularly in the form of ships and boats), labour (including warriors, slaves and tenants), land, textiles (elite and mundane), livestock, foodstuffs (ale, wine, meat, cereal products, butter, fish and so on), salt and oil (from seals, seabirds, whales and particularly fish).

² The realm of the earls of Orkney was subdivided into the earldoms of Orkney and Caithness, nominally subject to the kings of Norway and Scotland respectively (Crawford 1993, 130), but will be referred to as a unit here for the sake of simplicity. The degree to which Orcadian influence may at times have extended to the Western Isles and into the Irish Sea is more controversial. The thirteenth-century Icelandic saga tradition alleges that the eleventh-century earls of Orkney collected tribute in Man and the Hebrides (Sveinsson 1954, 208; Sveinsson & Þórðarson 1935, 76). Etchingham (2001, 178) dismisses this late evidence, but the contemporary poetry of Arnor Thordarson does attribute Earl Thorfinn Sigurdarson with influence as far south as Dublin (Whaley 1998, 263). Moreover, the distribution of ring-money finds in the Isle of Man has been interpreted as evidence for Orcadian domination in the late tenth and/or early eleventh centuries under earls such as Sigurd Hlodvisson (died 1014) (Dolley 1981, 175; Crawford 1987, 134; Williams 2004, 78). The question must remain open on present evidence.

Having established a working definition of what wealth was, how can it be measured? One must accept from the outset that most indicators will be qualitative and relative rather than quantitative and absolute. This is partly because no one standard of wealth can apply from the beginning to the end of the period under consideration, but mostly because of the paucity of evidence. No systematic records of exports or imports exist and the earliest rentals date from the late fifteenth century (Thomson 1996). A few indications of tithe and other ecclesiastical payments do survive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (see below), but these are very spotty in their coverage. The archaeological evidence is also problematic. One cannot, for example, estimate mint outputs as has been done by die-studies in Anglo-Saxon England (for example Blunt *et al.* 1989). In contrast with the Isle of Man (Bornholdt-Collins 2003), there was no coinage minted in the earldoms. Instead an initial bullion economy was replaced by the use of foreign currency (Graham-Campbell 1995).

It is possible to consider the weight and number of silver hoards, but even this seemingly straightforward measure of wealth must be used with caution. It is useful to consider the contents of single hoards (see below), but the distribution of hoards through time and space is influenced more by social and political trends than by wealth itself (Sheehan 2005). Leaving aside the issue of ritual deposition for present purposes, hoarding practice in Scotland correlated with periods of factional competition rather than times of economic boom (Barrett *et al.* 2000:4–9). If the wealth of the earldom were reconstructed on hoard deposition alone one would invent an economic ‘depression’ in the eleventh to twelfth centuries (Kruse 1993, 199)—exactly when the historical evidence indicates that Orkney was at its most wealthy and powerful under earls such as Thorfinn Sigurdarson, Rognvald Kali Kolsson and Harald Maddadarson.

This example introduces the relationship between wealth and power. Although the two are not synonymous, they are very close to being so—particularly in a Viking Age and early medieval context (Reuter 1985). Power requires its own means of production in the form of military force, a legitimising ideology and economic control (Mann 1986; Mann 2006). All three ultimately depend on wealth—to feast and reward a military retinue, to build fortifications and churches and to engage in long-range trade for example. Thus evidence for the earldom’s military power can serve as one important qualitative measure of its relative wealth.

In sum, the wealth of the earldom can only be evaluated using a variety of (mostly qualitative) indicators. To be meaningful, these need to consider change through time and to provide at least a relative contrast with neighbouring polities. Some categories of wealth, such as silver bullion, can (with caution) serve as direct indicators. Others, such as labour, are best measured by what they can create—be it military supremacy or monumental architecture.

Was the Earldom Wealthy?

Wealth in the Viking Age is often measured in terms of grave-goods. However, accompanied burial had ended in Scotland by *c.* 950 (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 152–4). Thus consideration of wealth in Atlantic Scotland during the floruit of the earldom of Orkney must begin with the evidence of silver hoards.

There are *c.* 34 Viking Age hoards of Scandinavian character in Scotland, 25 of which occur in the northern and western areas that might reasonably have fallen under Orcadian influence at one time or another. All the dateable examples were deposited between *c.* 935 and *c.* 1065 (Graham-Campbell 1995, 2, 83–4). In comparative perspective, over 70 hoards are known from Viking Age Ireland (Sheehan 2005, 323) and 118 are known from tenth- and eleventh-century Norway (Hårdh 1996, 33). Conversely, only *c.* 4 Viking Age hoards have been recorded from Iceland (Graham-Campbell 2005, 133–6). These admittedly simplistic comparisons suggest that the amount of silver flowing into Scandinavian Scotland equalled or exceeded other rural areas of the North Atlantic—but fell short of large urbanising regions such as Ireland and Norway.³ It would be informative to compare the weight distributions of hoards from these different locations, but such an exercise is not practical due to the incomplete recording of many antiquarian finds. Instead, one must be content with comparison of the largest known examples. The Skail hoard, totalling 8.11 kg deposited *c.* 950 (Graham-Campbell 1995, 83, 127), is among the largest Viking Age hoards of Scandinavia and three times larger than any tenth-century example from Norway (Graham-Campbell 1993, 180). However, the

³ Most of the Norwegian hacksilver hoards date to the eleventh century when towns were also developing (Hårdh 1996, 34).

Burray Hoard (deposited between *c.* 997 and 1010 on the island of Burray in Orkney) is more chronologically relevant. At *c.* 2 kg in weight it also qualifies as a large concentration of wealth in a late Viking Age context (Graham-Campbell 1995, 141).

The hoard evidence, such as it is, merges with a very different category of source as one enters the second millennium—genealogy. The importance of strategic marriage alliances in medieval Europe need not be rehearsed here. One can therefore interpret the status of marriages among the earldom's elite as one measure of its relative wealth. The most striking examples are two alleged royal marriages recorded in *Orkneyinga saga*: of Earl Sigurd the Stout to the daughter of a King Malcolm (probably Malcolm II, King of Alba from 1005–34)⁴ and of Ingibjorg Finn's Daughter, the widow of Earl Thorfinn Sigurdarson, to Malcolm III (King of Alba from 1058–93) before the latter's second marriage to Margaret (Guðmundsson 1965, 27, 43, 84).

The historical feasibility of these putative royal marriages is enhanced by better documented elite matches in the twelfth century. The daughters of Earl Hakon Paulsson (*c.* 1103–*c.* 1123) both married into powerful dynasties of the northern world. Ingibjorg probably married Olaf 'Bitling', King of Man and the Isles (Sellar 2000, 196–8) and Margaret married Maddad, Earl of Atholl—their son became the later Earl Harald Maddadarson of Orkney (Topping 1983). Harald Maddadarson (earl from 1138–1206) himself later married daughters of the Earl of Fife and of Malcolm MacHeth, Earl of Ross and unsuccessful competitor of the Canmore kings (McDonald 2003, 99). These examples corroborate the likelihood of earlier matches known only from northern sources, but may also imply a shifting balance of wealth and power. The twelfth-century matches are with petty kings, regional magnates and unsuccessful royal challengers rather than the Canmore dynasty itself.

Returning to the eleventh century, perhaps the most convincing evidence for Orkney's wealth is its military power under Earl Thorfinn Sigurdarson. One may or may not give full credence to *Orkneyinga saga*'s eulogy that he won "nine Scottish earldoms, along with the whole of the

⁴ Alternatively, Hudson (2005, 133, 135), following Taylor (for example 1938, 357, 361) and Crawford (1987, 64), argues that the husband in question was not Malcolm II. He opts instead for Malcolm *mac Máel Brigti*, a member of the rival dynasty of Moray.

Hebrides and a considerable part of Ireland” (Pálsson & Edwards 1981, 75) or to the more contemporary evidence of *Þorfinnsdrápa* that “folk were forced to heed the ring-harmer [(generous) ruler] from Þursaker to Dublin” (Whaley 1998, 263, brackets in original). Nevertheless, Scandinavian sources consistently record that Thorfinn’s court was beyond the military reach of King Magnus the Good of Norway (1035–47). Magnus, who succeeded to the kingship of Denmark (after the death of Cnut the Great’s heir) as well as Norway (Andersson & Gade 2000, 127; Tschan 2002, 122), was a major power in northern Europe. Nevertheless, Thorfinn’s earldom escaped military intervention even in cases of extreme provocation. Chief among these were the sheltering of Kalf Arnason and the killing of Earl Rognvald Brusason.

Kalf Arnason was one of Norway’s great eleventh-century magnates. However, he fell out with King Magnus the Good over his involvement in the death of the king’s father (Olaf Haraldsson or St. Olaf) and sought refuge with his retinue at Thorfinn’s court in Orkney.⁵ Rognvald Brusason was Thorfinn’s cousin and co-earl. However, he had fought with King Olaf Haraldsson at Stiklestad and after the battle joined Olaf’s son, the young Magnus Olafsson (later ‘the Good’), in exile in Kiev. After Cnut the Great’s death, Rognvald supported Magnus’ return to Norway as king. He later ruled Orkney jointly with Thorfinn for some years, but conflict eventually arose and Rognvald was murdered. These events are mainly known from prose sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (for example Guðmundsson 1965, 53–6, 63, 73–4; McDougall & McDougall 1998, 33; Andersson & Gade 2000, 98, 98–9, 103–4), but are corroborated to some degree in the contemporary verses of Arnor Thordarson *jarlaskáld* (Whaley 1998).

Skaldic poetry is relevant to the question of Orkney’s wealth in its own right. Much of Arnor’s work, for example, was composed under Thorfinn’s patronage and shows at least the pretence of an elite court to rival that of Norway’s kings. Thorfinn’s pilgrimage to Rome and foundation of a Bishopric (Guðmundsson 1965, 80; Tschan 2002, 216) may also imply the illusion or reality of ‘royal’ grandeur. In this context it may be relevant that tenth to thirteenth-century sources imply that the Old Norse term *jarl* (earl) originally described tributary kings or

⁵ Thorfinn was married to Kalf’s sister (Andersson & Gade 2000, 104) or niece (Guðmundsson 1965, 63), the Ingibjorg Finn’s Daughter who later married Malcolm III of Scotland noted above.

“formerly independent rulers” rather than regional royal administrators (Sawyer 1991, 284).

By the end of the eleventh century, Orkney did fall within the military reach of Norway’s kings. Magnus Bare-Legs deposed Thorfinn’s descendents and may have put his own young son, the later King Sigurd of Norway, in charge of the earldom. Nevertheless, this episode at least implies that it was a temptation worth the effort and a prize worthy of royal vanity. The intervention was short-lived, as Sigurd returned to Norway after his father’s death in 1103 and Orkney reverted to local control (Guðmundsson 1965, 95, 102).

Much of the evidence for the earldom’s wealth in the twelfth century is similar to that of the eleventh. Elite marriages have already been mentioned and Orkney’s earls continued to embark on grand pilgrimages and to employ court poets. *Orkneyinga saga* claims that Earl Hakon Paulsson (c. 1103–c. 1123) went to Jerusalem (Guðmundsson 1965, 113) and Earl Rognvald Kali Kolsson’s (1136–58) expedition to the holy city—in which a number of prominent Norwegians took part—is recorded in Rognvald’s own poetry (Bibire 1988, 218–23). Runic graffiti added to the walls of the Neolithic tomb of Maes Howe may have been carved by some of these mid twelfth-century ‘crusaders’ (Barnes 1994, 40).

The most visible expression of wealth in the twelfth-century earldom, however, was investment in monumental architecture. Secular examples include towers or castles such as The Wirk, Rousay (Lamb 1993, 53–4), ‘Cubbie Roo’s’ Castle, Wyre (RCAMS 1946, 235–9), and the Castle of Old Wick, Caithness (Talbot 1974, 40; Gifford 1992, 113). Ecclesiastical examples include St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall (Crawford 1988), The Bishop’s Palace, Kirkwall (Simpson 1961; Cox *et al.* 1998), St Magnus Church, Egilsay (Ferne 1988, 159), and a plethora of possibly private churches at sites such as Orphir (Fisher 1993), Birsay (Morris 1990, 22–4) and Deerness (Morris & Emery 1986) (see also Cant 1984; Morris 2003).

As noted above, St Magnus Cathedral, the greatest of the ecclesiastical undertakings, was comparable in scale to contemporary parallels in Scotland and Scandinavia (Cambridge 1988, 122–24). It was built under the patronage of Earl Rognvald Kali Kolsson, partly on payments negotiated with local landholders according to saga evidence (Guðmundsson 1965, 174). As William Thomson (2001, 97–8) has observed, the elevation of a martyred earl to patron saint and the construction of a cathedral in his honour “can be seen as an assertion

of the quasi-royal status of the earls of Orkney.” Clearly St. Olaf of Norway provided the model.

The military power of Orkney also remained considerable in the twelfth century. The evidence includes a series of conflicts between Earl Harald Maddadarson (1138–1206) and his nominal superiors—King William the Lion of Scotland and King Sverrir Sigurdarson of Norway. Harald was intermittently at war with William from at least 1196 until 1202 (Topping 1983; Crawford 1985; McDonald 2003). He was also indirectly involved in a failed rebellion against Sverrir that ended in the death of many men from the Northern Isles at the battle of Florvåg in 1195 (Sephton 1899, 146–52, 156; Guðmundsson 1965, 297; see Imsen 2003).

These events were the beginning of the end for Orkney’s history as an independent polity, but they do underscore its considerable wealth at the turn of the century. Harald threw himself on Sverrir’s mercy after the battle of Florvåg and kept his earldom at the price of Norwegian annexation of Shetland, large-scale confiscations of land in Orkney and the appointment of a resident royal administrator (Sephton 1899, 156–157). These events must have had a significant impact on Harald’s income from taxation and rent, but when open conflict with King William the Lion of Scotland resumed in 1201 and 1202, he was nevertheless able to pay 2000 “pounds of silver” to placate the Scottish monarch and recover his rights to Caithness (Skene 1872, 272; see Crawford 1985, 32). This last example is probably the most explicit indication of the earldom’s wealth at this date. Even after the losses of 1195, Harald was able to conjure a substantial sum at short notice. If the 2000 pounds is accurately reported by Fordun, and treated as currency rather than weight (as is probably more realistic), it would have been three quarters of the value of 4000 Scottish merks sterling (*c.* £2667) paid to Norway by Alexander III for the permanent annexation of the Western Isles in 1266 (Donaldson 1974, 36; Spufford 1986, 211). Although small change in comparison with the sums exchanged by Europe’s super-rich (the £66,000 paid to ransom Richard I of England in the 1190s for example), this 2000 pounds was clearly not trivial in a northern context.

The events of 1202 end the chronological range of this study, but it is necessary to move forward in time if more systematic records of the relative wealth of the earldom—in the form of tithes, taxes and rents—are to be found. Tithes were probably introduced to both Norway and Orkney in the twelfth century (see Helle 1988, 53; Sawyer 1988, 40).

The issue of when regular taxation and related payments such as rent were introduced is far more controversial (cf. Andersen 1991; Williams 2004). Nevertheless, payments of this kind must also have been in place by at least the twelfth century.

Given the paucity of surviving records, the earliest comparison possible is provided by crusading tithes on ecclesiastical income in Scotland collected by order of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291–92 (McNeill & MacQueen 1996, 300–1). Data regarding the diocese of Orkney itself is not available, but Caithness and Sodor (the Hebrides and the Isle of Man) are relevant. Caithness was largely under Orcadian control until at least the thirteenth century (Crawford 1985) and the territory covered by the diocese of Sodor may have paid tribute to powerful earls such as Thorfinn Sigurdarson.⁶ In contrast to the wealth implied by the anecdotal evidence considered above, the ecclesiastical incomes of these regions are modest. Caithness (£23) was the poorest diocese in Scotland. Sodor (at £68, including Man) was wealthier, but nevertheless dwarfed by St Andrews (£235), Glasgow (£225) and Aberdeen (£85). Even if all of the dioceses conceivably controlled by Orkney at one time or another in the eleventh century are combined (that is Caithness, Ross, Sodor and Argyll, excluding Orkney and Shetland themselves for which data are not available) the figure only reaches £166. If this value is hypothetically doubled to include the Northern Isles, the wealth under the potential control of Thorfinn Sigurdason would register as significant in a wider Scottish context. However, later eleventh- and twelfth-century earls did not have similarly extensive dominions.

A similar picture of modest wealth emerges when crusading tithes collected from Norway, Orkney and Greenland in 1327 are compared. Based on Keller's (1991, 138) analysis, Orkney's assessment (768 marks) was three times that of Greenland (254 marks), but only a small proportion of Norwegian dioceses such as Oslo (5002 marks), Nidaros (4207 marks), Bergen (2700 marks) and Hamar (1571 marks). Moving later still, the rental value of Orkney and Shetland (through the collection of rents, taxes and related payments) was only c.£15,000 in the 1590s (Anderson 1992, 155). Although not directly comparable in chronology or character, it is surely relevant that rental values for Edinburgh and Aberdeen alone in 1639 were as high as £130,000 and £54,481 respectively (McNeill & MacQueen 1996, 320).

⁶ See note 2 above.

In sum, there is a reasonable body of anecdotal and archaeological evidence for the considerable wealth and power of the earldom of Orkney in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Conversely, the patchy quantitative evidence that begins to appear in later centuries is more consistent with relative impoverishment *vis-à-vis* the neighbouring kingdoms of Scotland and Norway. How can this contradictory evidence be reconciled?

One possibility is simply that the earldom of Orkney was always poor, despite the illusion of evidence to the contrary. Perhaps the hoards are unrepresentative, the royal marriages of the eleventh century fictitious (or strategically rather than financially motivated) and Thorfinn Sigurdarson's fame more pretence than power. Perhaps the political marriages of the twelfth century were between the kin of small-time magnates and the monumental architecture of the same period was a flash in the pan. Perhaps the record from *Fordun's Chronicle* of Harald Maddadarson's payment of 2000 pounds of silver in 1202 is simply inaccurate, or should be viewed as a relatively modest sum. Although these alternatives are conceivable, it would be a coincidence for all of them to apply.

Part of the solution to this apparent contradiction is probably the growth of central power, territorial control and urbanism in the neighbouring kingdoms of Scotland and Norway. Both were developing into medieval states on a European model during the centuries under consideration (Barrow 1981; Bagge 1996). In this process Orkney's elite lost control of land (including the income of tax, rent and proprietary estates) and the capacity for freedom of military activity (including the wealth it could generate through plunder and mercenary service). By the early thirteenth century the earls ruled only the Orcadian archipelago and a fraction of what had formerly constituted Caithness—having lost Shetland (Sephton 1899, 156–7), Sutherland (Crawford 1985, 32–3) and (if the alleged extent of Thorfinn's domain is not entirely fictitious) other territories to the south and west. Thus the wealth of neighbouring states was growing while that of Orkney's elite was increasingly curtailed. Both processes must be seen as leading to the relative poverty of the earldom in later centuries.

Nevertheless, the values of tithe and rent from late and post-medieval sources presumably do reflect the relative capacity of basic rural production in Orkney and its sometimes tributary regions. It is unlikely that the productivity of farming decreased with the waning of local political independence—unless, by coincidence, the impact of late

medieval climate change and Europe's fourteenth-century economic crisis was disproportionately large in Orkney (see Thomson 1984). Thus if Orkney's elite was exceptionally wealthy and powerful in the eleventh to twelfth centuries, it is reasonable to suggest that it could call on means of production which do not figure in, or are poorly represented by, the later records. If so, what were they?

Returning to the theme that the Northern and Western Isles were situated on the western sea routes between Norway, the North Sea, the Irish Sea and the North Atlantic, and drawing on analogies from neighbouring regions or later periods, one can construct the following list of potential sources of wealth (cf. Wilson 1976, 110):

- piracy and mercenary activity,
- shipping tolls,
- provisioning and piloting shipping and
- export trade.

Each is worth brief treatment in turn.

Piracy and Mercenary Activity

Barbara Crawford (1987, 135–6; see also Williams 2004, 80) has suggested that Orkney's Viking Age and early medieval elite was sustained by a plunder or military economy (cf. Hedeager 1994). Defined simply, this involves the maintenance of power by rewarding military followers with booty or tribute attained by piracy and conquest of rival groups (Reuter 1985, 87–91). Mercenary activity can serve the same purpose, with wealth generated by both plunder and pay—often the same thing insofar as medieval mercenaries were often paid with a proportion of the plunder taken (Hudson 2005, 158).

Although piracy and plunder have occasionally served as the *sine qua non* of the early Viking Age, they were also common in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Piracy, at home and abroad, is frequently described as an activity of both earls and magnates in *Orkneyinga saga* (Guðmundsson 1965, 178–9, 188, 218, 226, 242–3, 250, 255–6, 283–8) and *Sverris saga* (Sephton 1899, 156). While the products of plunder are not always mentioned, they included ships, money, cloth, cattle and malt. Irish sources add captives to the list, most of whom were probably ransomed or sold (Holm 1986). Many captives were probably turned

into other sources of wealth in Dublin's slave market, particularly during its eleventh-century floruit. In 1015 seven ships from the Scottish islands (possibly from the fleet assembled by Earl Sigurd Hlodvisson of Orkney for the Battle of Clontarf) were slave raiding in western Ireland (Holm 1986, 318, 333; see below).

It is highly probable that much wealth also entered the earldom as direct or indirect payments for military aid. The most famous eleventh-century example is Sigurd Hlodvisson's participation at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 (MacAirt & MacNiocaill 1983, 447), but Orcadian involvement in a mixed Norwegian, Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English invasion of western England in 1058 can be interpreted in a similar light (Etchingham 2001, 153). The *Life of St. Gwynllyw* also claims that the eleventh-century Welsh ruler Gruffudd ap Cynan made use of an Orcadian fleet for raids around the River Usk (Hudson 2005, 182–3). In a North Sea context, there was an Orcadian contingent with King Harald Sigurdarson at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066 (Swanton 2000, 199).

Mercenary activity seems to have continued unabated into the twelfth century, when Orcadian magnates were active in both the east and the west. Examples include a contingent of Orcadians at the Battle of the Standard north of York in 1138 (Anderson 1991, 189; Oram 1991) and the likely participation of the Orcadian magnate Svein Asleifarson in a failed Irish bid to retake Dublin in 1171 (Barrett 2004).

It is probable that some of the late tenth and eleventh-century silver hoards mentioned above owe their origin to plunder, tribute and/or military service (Kruse 1993, 196; see Graham-Campbell 1993, 180). For example, hoards such as Dunrossness and Caldale, which included a coin of Harald Sigurdarson (died 1066) and English coins of Cnut (died 1035) respectively (Graham-Campbell 1995, 97, 103), are prime candidates for mercenary pay. Skaldic poetry and saga accounts also include frequent allusions to gifts of silver and gold objects or coins in exchange for real or anticipated military service (Dasent 1894, 366–7; Guðmundsson 1965, 99–100, 201; Bibire 1988, 228, 235). Other gifts such as ships are also mentioned, albeit more as political acts than as direct payments for service (for example Dasent 1894, 345; Guðmundsson 1965, 33, 56, 195). Payments in kind could also be made. In the twelfth century the Dublin fleet was hired for thousands of cattle (Holm 1986, 338).

Shipping Tolls

It is tempting to see the imposition of tolls for passage as a potentially important source of wealth in the earldoms (Wilson 1976, 110; Kaland 1982, 94; Morris 1985, 232). Certainly the example of the Store Bælt, Lille Bælt and Øresund tolls imposed by Denmark reveals the potential of such an exercise (Sawyer & Sawyer 1993, 147; Smith 1984, 11). The coastal position of the twelfth- to thirteenth-century castles of Caithness (Talbot 1973; 1974; Batey 1987, 22; Gifford 1992, 113, 117)—and of Earl Thorfinn's settlement at Birsay (Morris 1985, 232; Crawford 2005)—could be interpreted as an attempt to control the coastal waterways approaching Orkney.

The supporting historical evidence is limited but informative. In one twelfth-century anecdote from *Orkneyinga saga*, a merchant ship was instructed to land and exhibit its wares to Earl Paul Hakonarson (died c. 1137) (Guðmundsson 1965, 168). An early thirteenth-century reference from the *Sturlunga saga* compilation is late and refers to the Hebrides rather than the Northern Isles, but may provide a useful analogy. When the bishop-elect of Holar in Iceland was forced to land in Scotland by poor weather (while *en route* to Norway) the local ruler claimed a landing toll in woollen cloth (Anderson 1990, 358–60). The interception of passing shipping was therefore possible, particularly given the vagaries of weather and the (sometimes exaggerated) medieval custom of coastal navigation (Marcus 1980, 116–17).

Provisioning and Piloting Shipping

Provisioning passing shipping could have played an economic role at several levels of society. The scene can best be set using analogies from later periods. It is likely that Shetlanders were provisioning Hanseatic merchants from the beginning of their direct trade with the islands in the early fifteenth century (Friedland 1983, 88, 93) and this tradition continued with the growth of the Dutch herring fishery off Shetland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Goodlad 1971, 83). The occupants of Shetland actually spoke Dutch as well as Norn and English in 1700 (Brand 1883[1701], 104). Scottish merchants were also being provisioned in Shetland in the seventeenth century (Melton 2004).

In these centuries, the demand for provisions was met by both peasants and magnates. The foud (king's representative) in seventeenth-

century Shetland rented lodgings (including board) to Hanseatic merchants for their summer visits (Friedland 1973). Conversely, one of the Orkney country acts of 1615 (passed at Kirkwall to temper the newly introduced Scottish law to previous practice) regards 'sluggish and idle persones quha, leaveing service, gives them selfis to traffique and play the merchand and attendis the repairing of sh[ippis] and straingeris...' (Barclay 1967, 30). Evidence for provisioning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is meagre, but *Orkneyinga saga* does include an anecdote (attributed to the 1150s) in which a Norwegian lodging in Orkney prior to Earl Rognvald's pilgrimage to Jerusalem refused to pay for malt and animals he acquired from a local tenant (Guðmundsson 1965, 206). As in later periods, this account suggests that provisioning could generate wealth directly for the peasantry.

Although early evidence for the use of local pilots is lacking, this was a common and necessary practice recorded in the thirteenth century and later. For example, pilots were sought in Shetland prior to King Hakon Hakonarson's campaign to Scotland in 1263 (Dasent 1894, 342). They were also employed by Bremen merchants trading in Shetland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Friedland 1973). In later periods, piloting seems to have been organised on a somewhat *ad hoc* basis (for example Withrington & Grant 1979[1791–1799], 22), perhaps providing a pleasant windfall for local farmers and fishers. It is impossible to know how this service might have been organised in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but the resulting wealth is likely to have been of similarly small scale.

Export Trade

Is it conceivable that the wealth of Orkney's elite was at least partly based on export trade? To answer this question one must first consider the extant historical references to trade. Given the very poor written record for the centuries in question, however, one must also consider archaeological evidence for imported and exported goods.

The documentary evidence for export trade includes references to merchant voyages to and from the earldom in *Bandamanna saga*, *Njals saga*, *Orkneyinga saga* and *Sverris saga* (Sveinsson 1954; Guðmundsson 1965; Porter 1994; Sephton 1899). *Bandamanna saga* attributes a trading voyage in which an Iclander bought malt and grain in Orkney to the eleventh century, although its account may relate more closely

to the thirteenth century in which it was composed (Gelsinger 1981, 119; Porter 1994, 5, 110). A passage in *Njáls saga* (composed late in the thirteenth century) in which “the Njalssons sailed from Orkney to Norway and spent the summer trading there” is similarly ambiguous (Magnusson & Pálsson 1960, 9, 188). Direct references to merchants or trading ships in *Orkneyinga saga* include alleged twelfth-century voyages between Shetland and Norway, Orkney and Norway, Orkney and Scotland and the earldom in general and Bergen (Guðmundsson 1965, 148, 190, 193, 238). Indirect evidence that may imply trading activity includes a reference to Orcadians in Grimsby, England, (a medieval fish market) in the early twelfth century (Guðmundsson 1965, 130; see below).

Far more informative is *Sverris saga*, which was begun in the late twelfth century and finished before c. 1210 (Holm-Olsen 1993). In a speech against drunkenness brought on by the import of German wine, the saga composer had Sverrir thank those regions that brought goods beneficial to Norway.

We desire to thank the Englishmen who have come here, bringing wheat and honey, flour and cloth. We desire also to thank those who have brought here linen or flax, wax or caldrons. We desire next to make mention of those who have come from the Orkneys, Shetland, the Faereys or Iceland; all those who have brought here such things as make this land the richer, and we cannot do without. But there are Germans who have come here in great numbers, with large ships, intending to carry away butter and dried fish, of which the exportation much impoverishes the land; and they bring wine instead, which people strive to purchase, both my men, townsmen, and merchants. From that purchase much evil and no good has arisen... (Seph-ton 1899, 129).

Thomson (2001, 190) has interpreted this reference as an indication that Orcadians sent grain to Norway. There is clearly merit in this suggestion as *Sturlunga saga* records that an Orcadian merchant with a cargo of barley meal and malt stayed with Snorri Sturluson in Iceland c. 1203 (McGrew 1970, 129–30). It will be argued below, however, that the export of dried fish to Norway for transshipment to England and elsewhere is also likely.

Records from later in the Middle Ages imply that trade with lowland Scotland was also practiced. A purchase of 15000 ‘hard’ (dried?) fish, *durorum piscium*, from Symon, falconer of Caithness was recorded by the royal exchequer in 1329 (Stuart & Burnett 1878, 239) and an edict of King David II of Scotland from 1367 forbade travel to ‘the lands

or harbours of Orkney unless for travel, merchandise or other peaceful business.' (Crawford 1982, 69–70). In 1368 a shipment of salt to Orkney was intercepted (plundered?) by the earl of Ross (Burnett 1878, 308). The early fifteenth-century 'Complaint of the people of Orkney about the misrule of David Menzies of Weem' records the export of corn to Scotland by the foud of Orkney (Clouston 1914, 37). Although all of the extant historical records are late, finds of Scottish pottery in Orkney and Caithness suggest that this trade may have just begun to develop in the twelfth century (see below).

The archaeological evidence for export trade from the eleventh to twelfth centuries should be the material detritus of imported products. The movement of items over long distances does not necessitate trade. Nevertheless, it is a logical corollary of such a trade. Unfortunately, most of the relevant imports are likely to be invisible in the archaeological record. If one uses the late twelfth-century speech attributed to Sverrir as a guide, imports probably included wheat, honey, flour, cloth, flax, wax, caldrons and wine. Salt can be added to this list from medieval Scottish sources (see above) and timber was clearly also important in treeless Orkney (McCullagh 1982; Owen 2005, 207). Post-medieval historical evidence (which may be useful by analogy) adds fishing lines, nets, fruit, household furniture and currency—in addition to alternative forms of alcohol such as brandy, mead and beer (Fenton 1978, 3; Shaw 1980, 176, 179; Friedland 1983, 92; Smith 1984, 18, 28). In the absence of waterlogged deposits, which are extremely rare in Atlantic Scotland, most of these goods will not be recoverable.

Turning to what imports *are* visible, Bigelow has postulated that twelfth-century Shetland was characterised by an influx of wheel made pottery, antler combs, metalwork and whetstones (1989, 188–90). Broadening the chronological and geographical focus, imports of currency, steatite, wood and probably wheat can be added to this list (McCullagh 1982; Huntley 1994; Graham-Campbell 1995, 86–7; Bateson & Holmes 1997; 2003; Barrett *et al.* 2000, 21–2; Forster 2005; Owen 2005, 207).

The most ubiquitous import is steatite, which was used for vessels, spindle whorls, baking plates, fishing weights, lamps and other utilitarian objects. Unfortunately, however, it was quarried in both Shetland and Norway and is difficult to provenance (cf. Ritchie 1984, 78; Moffat & Buttler 1986; Jones *et al.* in press). Some of the material found in Orkney resembles Shetlandic types and thus indicates local exchange rather than long-range trade. Nevertheless, a proportion is probably

Norwegian based on stylistic criteria (Forster 2005). At Quoygrew in Orkney, imported steatite was used to the virtual exclusion of pottery in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Barrett forthcoming). Occasional shards of imported ceramics began to appear in the twelfth century at this site, but did not become common until the thirteenth century (Hall 2006).

In the centuries of present interest steatite was clearly the material of choice for vessels in the Northern Isles, in preference to both local and imported ceramics. Local potting did occur in the Western Isles in Viking Age and early medieval times (Lane 1990) and it had emerged in Caithness by the eleventh century (Hall 2001). However, ceramics were very late in penetrating the 'heartland' of Norse identity in the far north. The main exceptions are a few shards of Scottish White Gritty Ware from vessel forms that may date to the twelfth century recovered at fishing settlements such as Robert's Haven and Quoygrew (Hall 2001; 2006). These are nevertheless important, as they confirm the existence of trade (or other) connections with the emerging Scottish kingdom as well as with Norway. Bigelow has suggested that (whatever its original source) the most likely proximate origin for much or all imported pottery in medieval Shetland was Norway (1989, 188). A direct Scottish link is more likely for these few White Gritty Ware shards, however, given the absence of other types common in medieval Norwegian towns such as Bergen and Trondheim in contemporary contexts (Ditchburn 1990, 74; Reed 1990, 64–72; Blackmore & Vince 1994, 32).

Next to soapstone vessel fragments, antler combs are one of the most common finds from late Viking Age and early medieval settlements in the Northern Isles. Many of these have parallels in Norway and elsewhere in Scandinavia (Hamilton 1956, 167–8, 179–80; Curle 1982, 58, 74–5, 83–4; Bigelow 1984, 103–6; 1985, 122; Hunter 1986, 181–2; Batey 1987, 225–8; Weber 1993; Morris 1996, 59–61, 142–4; Porter 1997, 97; Clarke & Heald 2002; Ashby 2006). The eleventh to thirteenth-century combs from Quoygrew, for example, are almost identical to ones manufactured in Bergen (Hansen 2005, 182–3) and Trondheim (Flodin 1989). Moreover, despite some scepticism in the past (Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 23; Smith 1998, 131), new work by Steve Ashby (2006) has corroborated Weber's (1993) suggestion that many combs from Orkney and Shetland are probably made of reindeer antler. This identification provides complementary evidence for the import of antler combs from Norway.

Whetstones were probably also imported on a substantial scale (cf. Crosby & Mitchell 1987), likely as an adjunct to more valuable cargoes. Some, such as a group of at least twelve Eidsborg hones from eleventh- to twelfth-century deposits at Quoygreu, are clearly Norwegian imports (Gaunt pers comm.). However, a systematic analysis of the Scottish corpus is needed in order to understand the wider significance of this material. Metalwork (excluding bullion) is equally difficult to interpret. Some special objects such as ringed pins (for example Owen 1993, 327) were probably imported from Dublin (Fanning 1983; 1994), but only copper alloy sheet (from cauldrons?) is common (see Barrett 1995, 445–7) and it has not yet been the subject of detailed study. Isolated remains of charred wheat found in early medieval deposits at Freswick Links, Robert's Haven, Earl's Bu and Quoygreu may represent imported cereals given the environmental constraints on growing this crop in the far north of Scotland (Huntley 1994; Barrett *et al.* 2000, 21–2; Barrett 2005a, 270; Adams pers comm.).

The important trade in timber (from Norway and Scotland) for buildings and boats known from post-medieval historical sources must have an early origin (Thowsen 1969; Smith 1980; Crawford 1995; 2004). The key archaeological example is a pine lined room or “stofa” probably built early in the thirteenth century at The Biggings, Shetland (Crawford & Ballin Smith 1999, 218–19). Moving outside the formal chronological boundaries of this study, earlier and later examples of timber ‘trade’ can also be recognised. Offcuts of pine and oak planks and a maple handle (all of non-local taxa and lacking the characteristics of driftwood) were recovered from a waterlogged Viking Age pit at Tuquoy, Orkney (Owen 1993, 332). Moreover, excavations of fifteenth to sixteenth-century waterlogged deposits in Kirkwall recovered offcuts from finished timbers of oak and pine, as well as worked pieces of hawthorn, alder and ash. All are again likely to be imports (McCullagh 1982, 416–17).

The final significant category of archaeologically recognisable late Viking Age and early medieval imports is precious metals as coins, bullion and jewellery (Smart 1985; Graham-Campbell 1995; Bateson & Holmes 1997; 2003; Bornholdt-Collins 2003). These break down into hoards (all of which date from the mid tenth to mid eleventh century as discussed above) and single finds (which continue after the fashion for hoarding passed).

As a group, the hoards include imported gold objects, silver coins (for example Arabic, Anglo-Saxon, continental, Norwegian), and uncoined

silver in the form of ingots, 'ring-money' (plain penannular silver rings), hacksilver (cut silver of diverse origins) and silver jewellery (Graham-Campbell 1995). Although their contents change over time, the Caldale hoard (deposited *c.* 1032–40) demonstrates that the mixed use of coinage, ring-money and pure bullion continued into the eleventh century (Graham-Campbell 1995, 49–56).

These hoards raise complex problems that have been the subject of much scholarly discussion. The act of burying silver, and then failing to (or choosing not to) recover it, is one which suggests a multiplicity of explanations, some prosaic, some symbolic (for example Bradley 1987; Hårdh 1996; Hedeager 1999; Graham-Campbell 2000; Niven 2003; Bornholdt-Collins 2003, 331). The silver objects themselves, however, reveal aspects of their role *before* burial. Three attributes are particularly pertinent to an interpretation of the nature of late tenth- and early eleventh-century trade: the predominance of silver bullion and coin over finished jewellery (Graham-Campbell 1995, 95–152), the presence of frequent nick marks (Kruse 1993, 189) and the possible existence of standard value units (Warner 1976; Kruse 1988; 1993; Williams 2004, 78–9). All suggest a role as currency, be it payment for tribute, mercenaries or goods and services. Tenth to eleventh-century ingots, hacksilver and ring-money are best interpreted as *coinage without a king*.

There are of course exceptions to this rule. Complete objects such as the gold rings of the Stenness hoard—that may date as late as the eleventh century (Graham-Campbell 1995, 130–1)—can easily be interpreted as prestige goods for gift exchange (see also below). Nevertheless, coinage, hacksilver and nicked ingots seem unsuitable media for such exchanges. As discussed above, a major element of plunder and military pay is highly probable, but some of this more prosaic material may also represent payment for export goods (see also Bornholdt-Collins 2003 for a Manx comparison). Ring-money lies between these extremes. It represents a very large 'denomination' but lacks the high decoration of an obvious status symbol. Williams' (2004, 79; see also Crawford 1987, 134) argument that it served for the payment of tribute is difficult to prove but not unreasonable.

In addition to hoards, a number of single finds of coins, ring-money, rings and gold or silver fragments of eleventh- to twelfth-century date are known from the earldom (Graham-Campbell 1995, 86–8; Bateson & Holmes 1997; 2003). It is impossible to provide a count, however, because the uncoined material cannot be closely dated. Restricting consideration to the numismatic evidence, at least 5 coins of eleventh-

century date and 4 coins of twelfth- or early thirteenth-century date⁷ are known from the Northern and Western Isles (Graham-Campbell 1995, 86–87; Tait 1995; Bateson & Holmes 1997; 2003; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2004a, 248).

Given the small number of items, Kruse (1993, 198) is understandably dismissive of this material. Nevertheless, it does show that bullion and coinage were circulating. Moreover, it is important that this rural North Atlantic context is not judged unfairly by comparison with more densely populated and monetised areas of Europe such as England. In the tenth and eleventh centuries the earldom of Orkney was anomalously silver rich in relation to the emerging Scottish kingdom (Smart 1985, 66–7). The amount of coinage in lowland Scotland prior to the reign of David I (1124–53) was probably very minimal indeed. Moreover, to provide a Norwegian comparison, no coin finds are known from Bergen in the excavated phases predating 1170 (Hansen 2005, 206).

Taken together, the archaeological evidence for imported products is modest in scale, but does confirm the existence of long-range trade—particularly with Norway, Scotland and (to a lesser degree) Ireland. The problem is to decide whether the evidence is limited because most imports were invisible or because there was simply not much trade.

The Products of Export

If export trade did play a role in the political economy of the earldom, what were the products of export? To begin, it is illuminating to look at post-medieval export records. Based on seventeenth-century accounts, Shaw (1980, 165) compiles the following list: malt, barley and butter (all from rent payments), hides, skins, meat, tallow; wool, woollen cloth (known as wadmel), stockings, fish, feathers, and salt. Oil, predominately from fish, but also from sea mammals and birds (see Fenton 1978), can also be added (for example McNeill 1901, 326).

The *quantitative emphasis* among these products varied in each region. For example, the Shetland export trade was more heavily dominated by fish in early modern times (Shaw 1980, 174) while Caithness and Orkney exported substantial quantities of grain (Mitchell 1906, 169;

⁷ Including coins of William the Lion, Richard I or John, and John that could date to either the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.

Shaw 1980, 166–7). The actual *products* of trade, however, were similar throughout the core area controlled by the medieval earldom. Many of these products are likely candidates for export in earlier centuries at one scale or another, but six can be singled out as particularly relevant: grain, butter, woollen cloth, cattle, fish and oil. Moreover, two products that had fallen out of fashion by the post-medieval period also require attention—one utilitarian (soapstone) and one luxury (slaves). Most of these potential exports can be considered briefly, but fish and oil require more detailed consideration and are thus left to last.

To begin with ‘luxuries’, slaves were probably one product of Orcadian piracy and warfare (Crawford 1987, 210). Dublin’s slave market had its floruit in the eleventh century and Bristol was also engaged in the trade at this time. Slave trading around the North Sea (between England and Denmark, for example) was also known in the eleventh century, and Iceland and Norway provided additional demand (Holm 1986).

The participation of the earldom of Orkney in this trade is seldom explicit, but this lacuna may reflect the geographical bias of the Irish annals that provide the key source material (Holm 1986). Slave raiders from Atlantic Scotland were only recorded when they entered the Irish Sea world. The most important example has been noted above in the context of piracy. In 1015 the *Annals of Inisfallen* record that seven ships of the foreigners of the isles—possibly a remnant of Earl Sigurd Hlodvisson contingent at Clontarf (Holm 1986, 318, 333)—raided western Ireland and captured 150 people as booty (Färber 2005, 187).

Although possibly important in the eleventh century, slave trading must have subsequently declined. In Scandinavia, slavery dissolved as a social category in the late twelfth century as ‘taxation forced peasant proprietors into tenancy’ and landless people had to join the households of others to survive (Karras 1988, 145, 160–3). Norwegian law codes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do include provisions regarding slaves, but these were perceived as obsolete by the latter (Larson 1935, 13, 26–7). Moreover, the Westminster Council of 1102 prohibited all trade in slaves in England and Irish sources imply that the Anglo-Irish trade was over by 1170 (Holm 1986, 340).

Turning to utilitarian goods, the export of cereal products is most conclusive, if not necessarily the most economically important. The cultivation of barley and oats was widespread in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland based on the archaeobotanical record (Barrett 1995, Table 5.2) and direct historical evidence for the export of grain by the beginning

of the thirteenth century has already been mentioned above. It is difficult to believe, however, that cereals could fully explain the apparent wealth of the earldom. The export of four shiploads of grain shortly before 1424 left the population suffering a shortage by which a commentator suggested “the country was almost ruined” (Clouston 1914, 37). Moreover, shortages are noted more frequently in later sources, with starvation or riots occasionally the result (Sibbald 1845[1711], 12; Brand 1883[1701], 39–40; Withrington & Grant 1978[1791–1799], 124, 143, 146–147; Pope 1979[1774], 328; Martin 1981[1716], 372). Early modern records of cereal export are also common, but often carry important caveats such as ‘in years of fruitfulness’ (Withrington & Grant 1978[1791–1799], 120), ‘in tolerable years’ (Withrington & Grant 1979[1791–1799], 250) and ‘in fruitful seasons’ (Pope 1979[1774], 328). Moreover, the potential for cereal cultivation varied considerably from island to island (for example Low 1879[1774], 49). Although occasionally an object of commerce, cereals must have served a more important economic role as the basis of subsistence for all levels of society in the earldoms—from peasant gruels to the ale of elite feasts.

Trade in butter can probably be assumed by analogy with Norway, where it was noted as an export product in the twelfth century (Sephton 1899, 129). This possibility is strengthened by the recovery of many neonatal calf bones from excavated Northern Isles settlements—particularly in eleventh to twelfth century and later phases (see Harland 2006 and references therein). Examples include Sandwick South (Bigelow 1984, 133–4; 1989, 188), Sandwick North (Barrett & Oltmann 2000), Pool (Bond 1998, 85–6) and Quoysgrew (Harland 2006). Despite some arguments to the contrary (for example McCormick 1992), this zooarchaeological pattern suggests that the output of dairy produce was critically important—if left alive calves compete with humans for milk (Mulville *et al.* 2005).

In the first instance, much of the resulting product was probably converted to storable butter in order to pay tax, rent or tithe (Challinor 2004). An addition to *Orkneyinga saga*, referring to 1222, records a dispute between Bishop Adam of Caithness and the local population regarding an increase in butter tax or tithe (Guðmundsson 1965, 298–300; Crawford 1985, 28) and the earliest surviving records of rent and tax for Orkney and Shetland also make explicit reference to butter (Thomson 1996). Moreover, neonatal calves are uniquely absent from high status medieval settlements around Birsay Bay in Orkney, implying that the earldom’s elite received rather than produced dairy products (Harland

2006). While some of this butter must have served the direct needs of local retinues, both medieval sources⁸ and analogies drawn from later centuries in the Northern Isles (Shaw 1980, 165–6, 173) suggest that the products of rent were typically destined for export.

Woollen cloth (wadmal) may have been another export from the earldom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This possibility is largely based on analogy with Iceland (for example Gelsinger 1981, 111–15), but wadmal was recorded as rent for Shetland properties owned by the Munkeliv monastery in the fifteenth century (Ballantyne & Smith 1999, 13, 17). It also appeared in sixteenth-century Scottish records regarding Shetland (McNeill 1901, 326). In contrast with butter, however, the medieval zooarchaeological evidence does not show an age profile for sheep characteristic of specialised wool production (Harland 2006). Moreover, as wadmal was a product specifically associated with Shetland it may have been of mainly local importance—or even an introduction after Shetland was annexed to Norwegian rule in 1195 (see above).

The export of cattle is conceivable, at least from Caithness, based on analogy with later practice when highland herds were driven south to market (Baldwin 1986, 200–1). Alexander III did fine the people of Caithness in cattle after they supported King Hakon Hakonarson's invasion of 1263. This could conceivably imply an otherwise undocumented livestock trade. However, although 200 beasts were driven south they were intercepted by Lord Dougal of the Isles who “seized the great sum which they were carrying off” (Crawford 1985, 38). If droving occurred in the turbulent milieu of the late Viking Age and early Middle Ages it is hard to imagine it being a reliable source of wealth.

Steatite is another possible export that must be viewed as of relatively minor economic importance. Most or all soapstone vessels found in Viking Age and early medieval contexts in North-western Europe derived from quarries in either Norway or Shetland (Skjølsvold 1961; Ritchie 1984; Forester 2005). It is difficult to differentiate the two, but a few finds—such as bowl fragments and ingot moulds from York (Mainman & Rogers 2000, 2478, 2541–4)—have been tentatively identified as Shetlandic exports. Moreover, new typological work by Forester (2005) has shown that Shetlandic steatite was being exchanged within

⁸ Butter, mentioned as an export in *Sverris saga* (see above), was a product of tax in medieval Norway (Urbanczyk 1992, 234).

the earldom during the centuries in question. However, it does not seem to have been widely exported to more distant markets (Forester 2005, 68; see also Buttler 1991).

The final probable exports, fish and oil, require more lengthy consideration as much of the evidence is relatively new. We now know that the importance of fishing, particularly for large cod and closely related species, was profound in Viking Age and medieval Orkney, Caithness and Shetland (Barrett *et al.* 1999; Barrett & Richards 2004). Moreover, it seems to have been similarly significant in the Western Isles, where herring was also important (Ingrem 2000; Cerón-Carrasco 2005). These observations are critical to understanding the economy of the earldom of Orkney because the importance of fishing has episodically waxed and waned in later centuries (for example Thomson 2001, 368–9). With the exception of Shetland, where there was probably some continuity of fishing tradition (Goodlad 1971; Smith 1984), analogy from late medieval and post-medieval sources is therefore likely to underestimate or misrepresent the significance of this resource. The development of fishing in the late Viking Age and early medieval earldom of Orkney thus needs to be studied primarily using archaeological evidence.

Based on stable isotope analysis of human bone from burials in Orkney, fish may have provided up to *c.* 30% of dietary protein in the ninth to tenth centuries, rising to as much as *c.* 60% in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (Barrett & Richards 2004). Similarly, although large cod bones formed a significant component of ninth- to tenth-century middens in Orkney, Shetland and Caithness, they became superabundant in some eleventh- to thirteenth-century deposits (Barrett 1997; Barrett *et al.* 1999; Barrett 2005a; Simpson *et al.* 2005; Harland 2006).⁹ These ‘fish middens’ were partly created by the production of dried cod based on zooarchaeological study of butchery methods (Barrett 1997; Harland 2006).

Some of the resulting dried cod (and related species such as haddock) were eaten locally. We can see this at the elite site of Orphir (also known as Earl’s Bu) in Orkney for example (Barrett 1997; Harland 2006). Nevertheless, many were probably destined for export. The explosion of fishing and dried cod production in the Orkney earldom

⁹ Note that Robert’s Haven, originally thought to date to the thirteenth century (Barrett 1997), is now known to have accumulated between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (Barrett forthcoming).

shows the same eleventh to twelfth-century chronology as the growth of fish trade in early medieval Norway and England (Christensen & Nielssen 1996, 148; Barrett *et al.* 2004). It is therefore reasonable to speculate that the fishing boom in Atlantic Scotland was at least partly a response to new markets, with fishermen then (unsurprisingly) also eating more fish.

The products of export would probably have included fish oil in addition to dried cod (Cerón-Carrasco 1994; Nicholson 2004). The better-documented Norwegian trade provides a useful illustration. It had clearly begun by the twelfth century based on brief references in diverse sources (Bertelsen 1985, 50; Urbanczyk 1992, 132–3), but the oldest known customs records, from 1316, include the export of both dried cod and fish oil (Vollan 1959, 343–4). Also in the fourteenth century, records from English ports such as Hull and King's Lynn mention the import of cured fish and fish oil from Norway. Dried cod was the staple export of Norway at this time, accounting for approximately 80% of the region's exports (Bugge 1899, 219–22; Nedkvitne 1976, 250). This trade was largely dominated by the German Hanseatic League by the end of the fourteenth century, but Norwegian, English and other merchants played an important role in earlier periods (Gade 1951; Nedkvitne 1976).

Returning to Orkney, the most extensively excavated fish midden site is Quoysgrew, on the island of Westray, which has been mentioned in passing above (Barrett 2005a; Barrett *et al.* 2005; Harland 2006; Barrett forthcoming). It was probably first settled in the tenth century, but became a focus of semi-specialised fishing in the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Fishing then continued to be a major activity at the site until some point in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. After that fishing seems to have declined again, in keeping with the stable isotope evidence discussed above.

Quoysgrew's trade links can be established from the artefactual record. In the tenth to twelfth centuries almost all of the imported goods—such as steatite vessels, Eidsborg hones and antler combs—were of Norwegian origin. Scottish imports—mostly ceramics—then appeared alongside Norwegian products in thirteenth-century and later layers (Hall 2006). There is only one shard of Scottish pottery that may date to the twelfth century (of White Gritty Ware from a straight-sided vessel) (Hall 2006). If fish were exported from Quoysgrew, this trade must therefore have been conducted predominately via Norway until nearly the end of the period under consideration. From the thirteenth century, direct shipment to lowland Scotland may also have been important.

There is no convincing evidence from Quoygrew for extensive trade between the Northern Isles and Dublin or other Irish Sea ports. Nevertheless, eleventh-century metalwork probably made in Dublin has been found in other hoard and settlement contexts (see above) and twelfth-century Orcadian mercenaries were active in Ireland (e.g. MacCarthy 1893, 166–8; see above). Moreover, the Irish Sea links of the Outer Hebrides in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were very strong (at Bornish, for example—see Sharples 2004). Thus it is conceivable that Dublin, Chester and/or Bristol were also destinations for cured fish exports—albeit perhaps from regions only occasionally under Orcadian control (cf. Sharples 2004, 271).

To provide a social context for this activity, Quoygrew was probably a site of moderate rather than elite or low status based on the excavated architecture and artefacts. Moreover, other contemporary fish midden sites—such as Robert's Haven in Caithness (Barrett 1997) and St. Boniface on Papa Westray (Lowe 1998) in Orkney—have associated chapels and were thus probably on the estates of substantial landowners (see Morris 2003, 308–9). Conversely, settlements associated directly with the earl's of Orkney, such as Orphir, received rather than produced dried fish—be it in the form of tax, rent, tithe or the produce of proprietary estates (Barrett 1997; Harland 2006).

Given the archaeological evidence discussed here, it is surprising that there is no direct historical record of fish trade from the earldom prior to the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries (see below). This lacuna may imply that the putative trade was of negligible importance, but the chronology of the extant documentary record is a more likely explanation. By the time systematic English and Norwegian customs records emerged in the fourteenth century, the political independence of the earldom had waned and Norwegian law required that dried fish from its North Atlantic colonies pass through Norway, particularly via Bergen (Urbanczyk 1992, 76). Thus produce from the earldom would be indistinguishable from Norwegian fish in the relevant documentary sources. Moreover, fish traded directly to Scotland (be it from Caithness or from the Northern Isles in defiance of Norwegian policy) would also be largely invisible. Royal duties were not charged on cod until the fifteenth century (Ditchburn 1990, 83).

Knowing the problems with the historical evidence, one can probably detect the existence of a medieval fish trade by reading between the lines of what is recorded. Two references have already been noted above, but merit revisiting in the present context. The earliest is an anecdote in *Orkneyinga saga* allegedly referring to the early twelfth century.

Kali Kolsson, later to be Earl Rognvald of Orkney, travelled with traders from Norway to Grimsby, England, where he met people from Orkney, Scotland and the Hebrides (Guðmundsson 1965, 130). It is tempting to interpret this gathering at a town later known for its fish market (Rigby 1993) as evidence for Orcadian involvement in the medieval fish trade. Two centuries later, in 1329, the royal treasury of Scotland paid for 15000 dried fish that were probably from Caithness (Stuart & Burnett 1878, 239).

The most important piece of evidence, however, comes from what was probably the end of Orkney's medieval fishing boom. Around 1415 a Lübeck merchant, Heinrich Sparke, ignored the rules and traded directly between Norway and Orkney, leading the Hanseatic to ineffectually decree that voyages were forbidden to Orkney, Shetland and the Faroe Islands (Friedland 1973). We may also witness this trade in rare finds of fifteenth to sixteenth-century Rhenish pottery from Quoygrew (Hall 2006). Hanseatic activity quickly declined in Orkney, possibly due to increasing Scottish influence, but continued in Shetland until the eighteenth century (Fenton 1978, 3; Smith 1984, 10–20). With Heinrich Sparke, an Orcadian fish trade that was previously funnelled mainly through Bergen and lowland Scotland (and thus largely invisible) entered the historical record—ironically at a time when it was in serious decline based on the stable isotope and fish midden evidence.

In sum, the extant historical evidence indicates that the earldom traded fish with Norway, lowland Scotland and (indirectly or directly) the Hanseatic League by the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. The speech against drunkenness attributed to King Sverrir (see above), finds of White Gritty Ware pottery of probable twelfth-century style and *Orkneyinga saga's* anecdote regarding Grimsby imply the existence of Norwegian, Scottish and English trade in the twelfth century. Moreover, fish midden sites like Quoygrew may suggest that this trade began as early as the eleventh century—when Bergen, the focus of Norway's medieval fish trade, was also founded (see Hansen 2005).

Reconstructing a Political Economy

In summary, it would seem that the earldom of Orkney was indeed a wealthy polity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries—at least within its North Atlantic context. The sources of this wealth were probably diverse and of fluctuating relative value, but of all the possibilities considered

above piracy, mercenary activity and export trade stand out as particularly important. Piracy and mercenary activity are here very broadly defined (including the extraction of tribute from conquered regions and participation in royal Norwegian campaigns for example), and must be seen as interrelated elements of a military economy (cf. Hedeager 1994). If Orkney participated in the slave trade, as seems likely in the eleventh century, it too can be understood as part of the same system of violent expropriation of wealth. Export trade was different. It entailed the large-scale production and transport of high-bulk, low-value materials. Some goods may have been locally important—such as steatite vessels and woollen cloth in Shetland, cereal products in Orkney and cattle in Caithness—but overall butter, dried fish and possibly fish oil seem to have been the staple products of the earldom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Looking backwards, the coincidence of these two sources of wealth—plunder and trade in basic commodities—can be viewed as characteristic of the transition from a chiefly Viking Age society to a market oriented medieval state (Hedeager 1994; Barrett *et al.* 2000; Parker Pearson *et al.* 2004b, 203). It is probable that trade eclipsed plunder in the course of the two centuries of present concern. For example, despite a very violent career, Earl Harald Maddadarson (1138–1206) was far more constrained in his military actions than his eleventh-century predecessors such as Thorfinn Sigurdarson (see above). It is important to recognize, however, that this transformation may not have been equally obvious to contemporaries. For eleventh- and twelfth-century Orcadians the two systems must have been part of a single political economy.

To view this political economy in action one can turn to the biography of the semi-legendary Svein Asleifarson, whose life forms a major theme of *Orkneyinga saga* (Barrett 2004; 2005b). Regardless of the historicity of this material—and it is clearly fanciful at times—Svein's story was probably derived from local sources (Jesch 1992; 1996) and thus provides a useful window on the world-view of the twelfth-century earldom. It is not included here as an alternative to the archaeological evidence, but rather as a way of understanding how the kinds of wealth already identified might have flowed through daily life at a human scale.

Svein was the son of a magnate named Olaf Hrolfsson, who owned Duncansby in Caithness (where the eleventh- to thirteenth-century fish midden at Robert's Haven has been excavated) and another estate on the island of Gairsay in Orkney. Around 1135 Olaf was killed in a violent raid on Duncansby, but Svein was away fishing and escaped

with help from his boat-mates' father (who Svein rewarded with a gold ring). Later, Svein was exiled for killing a member of Earl Paul Hakonarson's (c. 1123–36) bodyguard, but he returned to Orkney by stealth in a merchant ship that was obliged to exhibit its goods to the earl. Paul was thus captured (probably later killed) and Svein recovered his local status and inheritance. Later in life, Svein had tenants (who themselves engaged in local trade) and farmed his own estate on Gairsay. He used the resulting produce to maintain a substantial military retinue, which he employed for piratical expeditions and to meddle in local chiefly politics. Many of his military expeditions were motivated by the obligations of kinship and reciprocity, but plunder was the usual outcome and family ties were sometimes severed over disagreements regarding the division of the spoils. Svein had more dealings with lowland Scotland than with Norway, but strong connections with Scandinavia also existed through his political patron, Earl Rognvald Kali Kolsson.¹⁰ Rognvald supported Svein by appointing him as his steward of Caithness (presumably along with much of the income of this territory), by providing him with ships and men for some of his piratical enterprises and by assisting him in times of conflict with rival aristocrats. Finally, Svein probably met his end acting as a mercenary in Dublin in 1171 (Barrett 2004). His rather hyperbolic eulogy in *Orkneyinga saga* reads "people say that apart from those of higher rank than himself, he was the greatest man the western world has ever seen in ancient and modern times" (Pálsson & Edwards 1981, 218).

Although anecdotal evidence at best, Svein's biography illuminates the linkages between many of the elements of Orkney's political economy discussed above. To a twelfth-century audience, Orcadian magnates could become fabulously wealthy through piracy, mercenary service, extracting rent, fishing and farming. The role of these magnates in trade is limited to incidental detail, but can nevertheless be inferred from the saga account and is of course independently implied by the archaeological record. In turn, earls of Orkney such as Rognvald Kali Kolsson derived their wealth partly by acting as magnates themselves, and partly by occupying the pinnacle of a rather flat pyramid. Power was thus the glue that bound the political economy, but it was expressed

¹⁰ Rognvald, mentioned above in the context of his meeting with Orcadians at Grimsby, spent his life in Norway until he succeeded in taking over the Orkney earldom and employed Icelandic poets in his retinue (Bibire 1988).

as a decentralised heterarchy (*sensu* Crumley 2005) that allowed competing aristocrats (and occasionally tenants—if presumably not slaves) an active role in the creation of wealth. From the top down, earls granted administrative roles (and presumably incomes) to their magnates and provided gifts and services in keeping with a military economy. Lesser magnates then supported their own followers.

There is a clear gender bias in this reconstruction, but it must be significant that Svein Asleifarson came to be known by a *matronymic*. Presumably Olaf's wealthy widow played a major if implicit role in her son's social and economic machinations. Given that stable isotope evidence suggests that Orcadian men ate more fish than their female contemporaries (Barrett & Richards 2004), it is probable that women were particularly responsible for maintaining the agricultural economy.

Putting the evidence together, one can envision a world where both humble tenants and wealthy magnates farmed and fished. Each then made payments to their respective superiors—typically in goods such as dried cod, fish oil, butter and cereal products. Some of this produce was used to maintain military retinues of various scales, which in turn were used to extract wealth through organized violence at home and abroad. From perhaps the mid eleventh century, when Bergen was founded (Hansen 2005), the rest was probably exported to Norway for transshipment to English and continental markets. Less frequently, surplus fish and other products may also have been sent directly to lowland Scotland, England and possibly Ireland. Concurrently, merchants visiting the islands (intentionally or unintentionally) were probably obliged to pay toll or to offer the earls of Orkney first option on their wares.

The resulting wealth might have taken various forms. It could be gold and silver (as objects, bullion or coinage) with which to reward followers or pay stonemasons for example. Alternatively, it might be in the form of textiles or other luxuries for conspicuous consumption. Lastly, it might simply be steatite vessels, hones, salt, lines or other necessities (such as weapons) with which to reproduce the political economy from the ground up.

Overall, this view of the earldom of Orkney in the eleventh to twelfth centuries is necessarily an oversimplification. On one hand, it suffers from a narrow focus on a very small part of the world. On the other, it reveals a political economy not so different from that characteristic of late Viking Age Scandinavia as a whole (Hedeager 1994), or even of chiefly societies cross-culturally (for example Earl 1997). Nevertheless, this study does illuminate the workings of such an economy in a real

world setting. It also answers an important question that may have wider relevance for other maritime polities of the Viking Age and Middle Ages—from the chiefdoms of Arctic Norway (Bertelsen 1991; Perdikaris 1999; Näsman & Roesdahl 2003) to the Kingdom of Man in the Irish Sea (Bornholdt-Collins 2003; Hudson 2005). How was it possible for a small place with limited agricultural potential to survive as a wealthy and independent principality? In the case of the earldom of Orkney the answer is predictable but informative. Its wealth was created by a competitive hierarchy of powerful magnates, each engaged in diverse economic activities ranging from keeping tenants and farming their own land to fighting for distant kings. Critical among these activities were piracy and fishing.

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“LIKE STRAY WORDS OR LETTERS”
THE DEVELOPMENT AND WORKINGS OF THE
TREASURE TROVE SYSTEM

Neil G. W. Curtis

We call for such a central ingathering and repository of Scottish Antiquities for another reason. Single specimens and examples of archaeological relics are in the hands of a private individual generally nought but mere matters of idle curiosity and wild conjecture; while all of them become of use, and sometimes of great moment, when placed in a public collection beside their fellows. Like stray words or letters that have dropped out of the Book of Time, they themselves individually reveal nothing, but when placed alongside of other words and letters from the same book, they gradually form—under the fingers of the archaeologist—into lines and sentences which reveal secret and stirring legends of the workings of the human mind and human hand in ages of which we have no other existing memorials.

(Simpson 1861, ii)

For almost two hundred years, antiquities discovered in Scotland have reached museum collections through the Treasure Trove process. In recent decades this has become a formal system coping with thousands of objects found by archaeological excavation and metal detectorists as well as accidental finds, at the heart of which lies an Advisory Panel. Barbara Crawford chaired the Panel from 1993 to 2003: a period which saw a four-fold increase in the number of cases, the appointment of the first full-time staff to the Treasure Trove Secretariat, the transfer of responsibility for the system from the Treasury to the Scottish Executive, the vast bulk of objects now being allocated to museums other than the National Museums of Scotland and a major review of the system. As a Panel member for the six of those years, I was constantly impressed by Barbara’s efforts to ensure that all decisions were fair to everyone and to make sure that the independence of her position was real. She was particularly concerned that small museums were not put at a disadvantage and initiated visits to museums throughout Scotland, sometimes accompanied by the Queen’s and Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer (Q<R): she also worked closely with the staff of the

Secretariat and the National Museums of Scotland. Likewise, she was always determined that the efforts of finders were properly recognised and that the system should be properly resourced.

In December 2004, the Scottish Executive responded to the Normand Review (Normand 2003), for which Barbara chaired the advisory group. The Treasure Trove Advisory Panel (TTAP) has now been reconstituted as the Scottish Archaeological Finds Advisory Panel and changes are now being made to the system. It therefore seems an appropriate point to look back on the development of the system since the first Treasure Trove allocation in 1808, considering also how the system works and some of the comments by the wide range of people it affects. This paper is not an authoritative statement on the legal background or the system's procedures. Those aspects have been discussed thoroughly elsewhere (Carey-Miller & Sheridan 1996; Carey-Miller 2002; Normand 2003; Saville 2000, 2002; Scottish Executive 1999a, 1999b). Instead, by considering how Treasure Trove has developed and how it affects people today, it tries to highlight some of its complexities, tensions and successes.

The right to claim finds for the Crown

Today, archaeologists are probably most familiar with statute law: laws passed by parliament, such as the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) governing the scheduling of ancient monuments and the Treasure Act (1996) which governs the claiming of portable antiquities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Just as important in Scotland is the common law, which consists of the 'rules of law which are not referable to any legislative enactment' (Gloag and Henderson 2001, para 2.24). Scots common law covers many important aspects of criminal law (such as the crimes of breach of the peace, theft, murder and rape) and civil law (such as laws of contract and aspects of property law). Rather than being based on an Act of Parliament, arrangements for claiming items as Treasure Trove therefore 'rest essentially on common law and long-established custom and practice' (Normand 2003, 5), such as the use of precedents and well-respected legal authorities to identify the underlying principle. Only once, in the 1962–3 case of the St Ninian's Isle Treasure, has Treasure Trove law been explored in court (Smith 1973; Carey-Miller 2002), but the principle has been succinctly put as 'all newly discovered archaeological objects...belong to the crown' (Bland 1996).

Rather than being restricted to ‘treasure’, like finds of gold or silver (Hill 1936), the Crown bases its claim to archaeological finds on their identification as *bona vacantia*, usually unhelpfully translated as ‘ownerless goods’. Instead, ‘it is a basic general principle of Scots law... that things which were once owned but have ceased to have any known owner become the property of the Crown. Once a thing has become the subject of ownership it can never be ownerless’. (Scottish Law Commission 1980: para 3). As the St Ninian’s Isle case demonstrated, the right to claim items for which the owner cannot be found is one of the long-standing rights of the Crown. All archaeological finds are Crown property, just as the estates of people who die leaving no will or surviving relatives become Crown property. Whether or not an object is claimed by the Q<R, the Crown is still the owner of the find. Unfortunately, the description of finds as ‘ownerless’ leads many finders to assume that they have ownership rights: perhaps a better translation of *bona vacantia* would be ‘goods with no traceable owner’.

While there are no legal problems restricting the Crown’s ability to claim recently excavated material, the practical and political difficulties are increased with objects that have been in private hands for many years. The only legal problems occur when the item has been altered such that it changes its nature—‘specification’—or incorporated into something else—‘accession’ (Carey-Miller & Irvine 2005) with title to item becoming subsumed within that of the new object. It has been suggested that the Crown would therefore have little claim on, for example, a Pictish stone built into a farm steading. Nonetheless, there have been a number of Treasure Trove cases in which stones removed from a building have been claimed by the Crown as having no traceable owner and allocated to museums.

Nationalised antiquities

Despite the simplicity of the Crown’s rights, the practice of claiming finds as Treasure Trove has varied substantially over the centuries. Initially, the Crown’s claim to treasure was simply to enrich itself by claiming material with no other owner. Perhaps the earliest recorded case of antiquities being claimed was in 1615 (Bateson 1997, 81–2; Hill 1936, 261), but it was not until the early nineteenth century that items so claimed were presented to a museum. In 1808, “About 108’ base-metal coins of Queen Mary, with no location, was the first gift from the

Barons of Exchequer' to the museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Stevenson 1981a, 56). Over the following decades many items followed the same route. Likewise, the acquisition book of Marischal College museum (Knight, 1810–12) records that 'two very fine gold coins of James the Ist & IInd of Scotland, presented to the College Museum by the Honble the Barons of Exchequer' in June 1816. Although this demonstrates that, at this early date, the museum of the Society of Antiquaries was not seen as the only appropriate repository for nationally-important antiquities, this is a very unusual case, with almost all items claimed as Treasure Trove during the nineteenth century being allocated to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland's museum. This practice was doubtless encouraged by Sir Henry Jardine, the King's Remembrancer, serving as Vice-President of the Society from 1817 to 1845. By 1888, as a result of such allocations and many purchases of antiquities, it was possible for the Keeper of the National Museum to state that 'the Archaeological collections existing in local Museums in Scotland are poor and fragmentary. There is no exception to this' (Anderson & Black 1888: 421).

Treasure Trove practice in the first half of the nineteenth century appears to have been very haphazard. Some objects were claimed, while others were purchased for the National Museum. At other times, the Crown appears to have been keen to demonstrate its rights, such as when a small medieval bronze seal was claimed 'from the Society, 'in order to vindicate the rights of the Crown to articles found in the above manner', and the Barons then directed it to be placed in the Museum.' (Stevenson 1981a, 72). In contrast, contact with Danish antiquarians showed a model in which the state, not private bodies like the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, took responsibility for the care of antiquities. With the agreement in 1851 to transfer the Society's collections to state ownership, it is not surprising that the mid-nineteenth century saw particular efforts by archaeologists to make use of the ancient rights of the Crown to ensure that as many finds as possible were taken into the National Museum's care.

Unlike elsewhere in Europe, where the establishment of national museums was often the result of a national political revival, nineteenth-century Scottish antiquarians and archaeologists were keen to do so within the framework of the British state. As well as improving the care of archaeological finds, the use of the Crown's right to Treasure Trove to underpin archaeological collecting therefore had the additional benefits of placing archaeologists close to the legal establishment and

giving the discipline a heightened status with a distinctive Scottish institutional heritage. The Scottish intellectual tradition of the mid-nineteenth century has been described as the ‘blending of openly demonstrative patriotism to unquestioned, unconditional unionism’ (Morrison 2003, 227). This combination of loyalty to the Union with a desire for the distinctive study of Scottish history was exemplified by Sir Walter Scott, who described the Union of 1707 as ‘an event which had I lived in that day I would have resigned my life to have prevented but which being done before my day I am sensible was a wise turn’ (Scott 1825). This is typical of British antiquarians who ‘were conservatives who had rejected the ideals of the Enlightenment and taken refuge in romantic nationalism’ (Trigger 1989, 75). The use of Treasure Trove to collect Scottish antiquities therefore contributed to the development of a politically unthreatening national identity. It also showed the benefits of gradual development of ancient legal practice rather than revolutionary change. It is therefore striking that, despite the Danish approach to antiquities being used as a model for Scotland, the study of Scottish archaeology never became as highly politicised or nationalistic as that of mid-nineteenth century Denmark (Müller 1886), though this was considered a disappointment to some, including Daniel Wilson. In 1852 he wrote of the failure of ‘an object I had much at heart, the establishing of a Museum of National Antiquities here. In Copenhagen a genuine nationality has been awakened on this; and it is wonderful what has been effected in Dublin. But Scotsmen seem to me beginning to be ashamed of Scotland—surely a woeful symptom’ (quoted in Ash 1981, 111).

Typical of much writing about Treasure Trove in Scotland are the statements by Ward (1931) that ‘the procedure outlined... applies only to objects found in England’ and by Historic Scotland (1996: 7) that ‘the law of Treasure Trove in Scotland differs from that elsewhere in the United Kingdom’. This tendency to make such comparisons reveals a continuing need to explain the system to people more familiar with English practice, even if it is more confusing. It also reveals a tendency to describe Scottish practice as if it deviates from an English norm. Confusing information about the legal basis of system is therefore widespread (arguably including the very term ‘Treasure Trove’), not only among finders and field archaeologists, but even among those archaeologists involved in its application. This also shows how far the application of the rights of the Crown has drifted from its original purpose to become an archaeological tool.

Treasure: artefacts or monuments?

As Foster (2001) has shown, the 1880s saw a debate about the curation of early medieval sculpture. As Keeper of the National Museum of Antiquities (1869–1913) and Assistant Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (1877–1913), Joseph Anderson strove to create a collection of such stones in the National Museum of Antiquities which opened in a new building in 1891 (Graham 1975–6). In opposition, the first Inspector of Ancient Monuments, General Augustus Pitt Rivers argued in 1889 that ‘as a general principle...it is not thought desirable to remove Ancient Monuments, from the districts to which they belong’ (quoted in Foster 2001, 36). As well as revealing the debate about whether carved stones should be considered as artefacts or monuments, this debate also reveals tensions between the representative of a long-established but poorly funded Scottish institution and the representative of an emergent institution of the British government. By leaving stones in their original localities, they could be more easily seen to be British than if they had been taken to the National Museum where their Scottish identity was paramount. Pitt Rivers also suggested that models of sculptured stones could be exhibited at South Kensington, London rather than Edinburgh (*ibid.* 38). The establishment of national institutions can often be in opposition to each other and with the claims of more local identities. While Anderson was successful in creating a national museum collection, today Historic Scotland pursues the same policy as did the first Inspector in endeavouring to keep carved stones as close as possible to their original location.

Five Pictish stones have been found at Tillytarmont near the confluence of the rivers Isla and Deveron in Aberdeenshire. Two are currently at the nearby Whitestones House, while the others are now in Marischal Museum. In 1867 the safest place for the first stone was thought to be building it into the walls of the farm steading; in the 1950s a further two stones were similarly protected by being moved to the nearby large house at Whitestone House (Ferguson 1956). This attitude had changed by the 1980s when the first stone was removed from the wall and taken into the museum with the landowner’s agreement; while in the 1990s a further two stones found in the 1970s were referred to the Q<R without reference to the landowner. The decision to claim these two stones was taken because they were seen as being at risk, having been removed to the farm of Little Craigherbs near Banff and

liable to be moved again on the retiral of the farmer. Other stones, some no larger than these, are protected by being Scheduled Ancient Monuments, something that does not alter their ownership but that prevents them being moved without permission from Historic Scotland. These changing practices show the growing influence of archaeologists in making the decisions about the care of such stones, whereas the rights of landowners have gradually declined.

The complex story of the Hilton of Cadboll stone (Foster 2001, 16; Jones 2004) saw a large portion of the stone initially donated to the British Museum by the landowner in 1921, but then transferred to the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh after protests from many Scottish organisations. Although the Treasure Trove procedure was not involved in the 1920s, the discovery of the base portion in 2001 did lead to the question of ownership being considered by the TTAP (Illus. 38). The main discussion was whether the newly discovered portion should stay in Hilton of Cadboll or should be reunited with the rest of the slab in Edinburgh. This was complicated by a deed of Guardianship which included a clause giving Historic Scotland the right to retain all excavated finds from the area round the stone's findspot. Ultimately, the Q<R declared that, as part of an object that had an identifiable owner, the newly discovered slab was already part of the collections of the National Museums of Scotland. This decision acknowledged the validity of the transfer of ownership of the stone in 1921, thus recognising that it had previously been owned by the landowner. The associated excavated finds were passed to Historic Scotland (following the normal practice applying to fieldwork funded by Historic Scotland), who then allocated the finds to NMS. The focus by archaeologists and heritage professionals on assessing legal title to the stone has been shown by Jones to be at variance with the attitudes of local people, whose 'claims such as "the stone belongs to us" are primarily an expression of a social relationship, rather than one of property' (Jones 2004, 50). She also argues that the removal of the stone 'is seen as a further example of the power of landowners and the State, as well as their failure to consult local communities' (*ibid.* 51). Rather than simply being an argument about the distinction between a portable artefact and a monument, this case shows that arguments about legal title can mask other forms of 'ownership' in which the Crown is not seen as an independent arbiter.

Claiming finds

Writing about Stonehenge, Bender has argued that ‘as the “official” interpreters, archaeologists, by and large, repudiate the “alternative” theories of the New Agers, and side with the conservationists in limiting access to the stones’ (1998, 121). There is a similar tension between the perspectives of archaeologists and finders on the effects of claiming material as Treasure Trove. For example, Simpson’s (1861) statement that finds can only be understood ‘under the fingers of the archaeologist’, and the Scottish Executive Treasure Trove guidelines which state that the system ‘has been used by the Crown specifically to benefit Scottish archaeology’ (Scottish Executive 1999b, 3) both emphasise that material can only properly be understood and curated when in the care of the museum/archaeological profession. Likewise, the early 1980s ‘Stop Taking Our Past’ campaign against metal-detecting has been criticised as revealing the tendency of archaeologists to see the evidence of the past as ‘their’ property. The long-term effect has certainly been seen as having increased the mistrust metal detectorists had of archaeologists (Bland 2005). The Scottish Treasure Trove system has been criticised by Selkirk (n.d.) who argues that it is ‘a typically comprehensive “nationalisation” law; and as such it has generally received unthinking approbation from English archaeologists—though it must also be held at least partially responsible for the general absence of amateur archaeology in Scotland.’ It is also important to recognise the important non-archaeological understandings that come from personal care of finds. An example is given by a finder quoted by Normand (2003, 20), who said ‘when I find a Celtic terret ring in a field where no dig would ever take place, I can almost hear the chariot pass by, the first man to touch this in 2000 years!!!!’.

One of the greatest weaknesses in the current system is under-resourcing. Without the equivalent of the Portable Antiquities Scheme’s regional posts, there must have been many finds lost to the system. Saville (2002) also noted that ‘the highly centralized, Edinburgh-based nature of the system is in itself a deterrent to reporting’, exacerbated by the diminishing number of museum archaeologists in Scotland. Not only are there very few explicitly archaeological posts in museums, few of the posts with a wider remit are held by archaeologists: outwith NMS the figure may be in single figures. This has reduced the opportunities for museums to interpret and display recent finds and so highlight the contribution of finders.

Rewarding finders

While the rights of the Crown to material with no identifiable owner are clear, in practice the success of the system relies on finders reporting items for possible claiming. While today the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 makes clear a finder's duty to report a find, the long-standing challenge has been persuading finders to part with their finds. As early as 1822, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland published a statement that 'the Barons of Exchequer, for the purpose of preserving the remains of Antiquity, have signified their intention of allowing the value of such Coins, and other articles of Gold and Silver, as may be discovered, and transmitted to their Lordships', though Stevenson (1981a) has noted that this does not seem to have had any impact at the time. Without a clear decision about who was to pay the reward, this is perhaps not surprising.

The publication in 1851 of *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* by Daniel Wilson has been seen as marking the establishment of archaeology and prehistory as a discipline in place of antiquarianism in Scotland. This led to the statement quoted at the beginning of this paper (Simpson 1861) which shows how it came to be believed that antiquities could only be properly understood by archaeologists. As well as the impact of Christian Thomsen's Three Age system which became available in English in 1836 (Trigger 1989), the impact of Danish archaeology was strengthened by the Danish antiquarian J. J. A. Worsaae's visit in 1846–7. Worsaae's explanation of the Danish approach to antiquities led to the Society of Antiquaries promoting a similar approach for Scotland with rewards paid to finders. This campaign, exemplified by Sir Henry Rhind's 1858 publication titled *The law of Treasure Trove: how can it best be adapted to accomplish useful results?*, had more success than that in the 1820s. The new, national, status of the Museum of Antiquities saw it having a monopoly of Treasure Trove allocations, while the more rigorous approach to claiming antiquities was advertised by a notice in the National Museum's catalogue (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 1859), a letter to schoolmasters, and a notice to procurators fiscal and post offices. This notice included the statement that finders would 'receive, through this department, rewards equal in amount to the full intrinsic value of the articles'.

In 1895 this process altered so that the National Museum of Antiquities paid the reward, having been given a purchase grant by government (Stevenson 1981b). This approach has continued to the

present day, though with more museums being allocated material it is not only the National Museum which has to bear the cost of the reward. However, the National Museums of Scotland is still normally involved through the contribution of 50% of the rewards from the National Fund for Acquisitions which they administer to museums allocated items. This places an unpredictable (and sometimes substantial) financial burden on Scottish museums, which is also poorly acknowledged as finders receive their reward from the Crown Office rather than the recipient museum. Although the practice of paying a reward has not changed since 1859, the policy is now that 'the finder is *normally* eligible for an *ex gratia* reward, *based on* the object's market value' (my emphasis) (Scottish Executive 1999b). Sometimes, the word 'award' is now used to emphasise that the finder does not have an automatic right to payment. A further diminution of the policy is the restriction that 'those who undertake organised archaeological fieldwork projects, whether on a paid or voluntary basis, are *not* eligible for any reward' (original emphasis) (*loc. cit.*), on the assumption that they do not need a reward to encourage the reporting of material, whereas freelance metal detectorists do. In practice, the exclusion from rewards has been further extended beyond formal fieldwork to exclude archaeologists who happen to make casual finds; and even in one case the partner of a museum curator. Thus has the archaeological community defined itself. In both 1861, when it was argued that 'archaeological relics are in the hands of a private individual generally nought but mere matters of idle curiosity and wild conjecture' (Simpson 1861, ii), and in the discussions surrounding the Hilton of Cadboll stone (Jones 2004), archaeologists have argued that only they have the appropriate understanding to make decisions about the care of antiquities.

The reward system is one of the most contentious aspects of the current system, with Normand noting that 'there was considerable dissatisfaction over the valuation of finds' (2003, 18). One finder commented that he was 'aware of some detectorists who, rightly or wrongly, feel that they are not being paid an adequate reward despite having gone to considerable lengths to obtain realistic valuations only to see them disregarded.' (Alastair Hackett, pers. comm.). As a result of this, there have been suggestions that there should be more involvement by finders and the antiquities trade in setting valuations, though this would cost considerably more to administer and would be unlikely to answer all criticism. There is, of course, a logical fallacy in the use of market values for valuing Scottish antiquities, as the Treasure Trove system means that there is only a very limited legal trade in Scottish

antiquities. Valuations are therefore based on the prices of similar items sold elsewhere, but for items unique to Scotland this raises problems. Carved stone balls are a good example. As none are normally available for sale, when one did appear for sale at auction it reached a sale price of £8,000 (Judith Stones, pers. comm.). Subsequently acquired by Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums, the publicity led to more than a dozen balls being reported to the Panel, presumably by people hoping that rewards would match this figure. As museums were not able to meet the cost of such rewards, the balls were disclaimed and the balls returned to their finders. Attempts by some of them to sell them failed to achieve the expected sale prices, with the result that recent rewards have been set at much more modest figures. It is ironic that the heightened expectations of finders, and thus their disappointment in the Treasure Trove system, was the result of a restricted market caused by the system itself.

Perhaps of greater importance are the non-monetary values attached to finds, such that it has been suggested that most detectorists 'value their finds much more highly than any money which they might receive for them' (Nick Holmes, pers. comm.). While it is impossible to quantify, the fear of finds being claimed must result in significant levels of non-reporting. The success of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in England and Wales (Bland 2005) hints at the many finds that are not reported. This scheme has also shown the impact of the appointment of Finds Liaison Officers whose role to 'take a proactive approach with finders is very important in ensuring that finds get reported, even with treasure finds where there is a legal requirement to do so' (*ibid.* 444). Building links with finders is therefore critical and the work of finders should be properly acknowledged by museums. When relationships are poor, finders will not report their discoveries. As one finder has said, 'I spend a lot of hours searching to discover these items and would far rather have them on display in my own display cabinet than to be hidden in a locked cabinet somewhere at the back of a museum' (Gordon Innes, pers. comm.). In contrast, the 'hot-spot' of metal detector finds in Moray shows the success of the Elgin Museum in building such relationships. The recent review of Treasure Trove arrangements endorsed Barbara Crawford's suggestion that 'all individual finders should receive a certificate from the Q<R, acknowledging the claimed find and stating where it has been allocated' (Normand 2003, 58), which should help to encourage such good practice. Avoiding a threatening system was also a concern in 1890 when Joseph Anderson commented that the involvement of the police and procurators fiscal associated the system

with the ‘popular odium attached to the criminal department’ (quoted in Stevenson 1981b, 170–1). It is also possible that the term ‘Treasure Trove’ is itself a problem. As shown above, it reveals a misunderstanding of the legal basis for claiming most finds and also implies buried wealth: inconsistent with finds of medieval pottery and prehistoric lithics with a very limited market value. It may be that the renaming of the Advisory Panel could offer an opportunity to avoid such language with overtones of monetary gain.

The length of time between a finder reporting a find and receiving a reward is another frequent source of complaint. The recent review noted that it had taken over a year for about a fifth of finders (Normand 2003). With many people involved in the process and delays caused by disputed valuations or allocations, this is perhaps not surprising. It is, however, very frustrating for finders that rewards are not paid as soon as the item is claimed, but have to wait until allocation is completed and the recipient museum has paid the Crown Office the cost of the reward. Such delays in responding to finders are, however, not new. In 1862 the schoolmaster of Migvie School, Aberdeenshire wrote to John Stuart, Secretary of the Society of Antiquaries to complain that he had given ‘Mr Ross, Banker, Tarland, a bronze axe or spear head a year or two since to give you, the size of it being about 4 or 5 inches long about 2 broad. I do not know if ever he delivered it or no’ (Smith 1862). The problem with delays is that they are seen as reflecting a lack of care for the finder, leading to comments that ‘the system, in general [is] not very detectorist friendly at all, and some aspects of it actually deters detectorists from surrendering finds’ (Gordon Innes, pers. comm.)

As excavation assemblages are not considered for allocation until all post-excavation analysis is completed and a definitive list of items created, a consequence of the Treasure Trove process is to break the link between those responsible for excavation and museums. It is therefore difficult for an excavator to know which museum to contact to discuss the documentation of finds to suit the museum’s documentation system or to assist in the public interpretation of a site. This is a particular problem in an area in which a number of museums have overlapping collecting policies, such as the North-East, where this could be up to five museums. Until recently, a further complication for excavators was that finds excavated during fieldwork sponsored by Historic Scotland were transferred by the Q<R to Historic Scotland’s Finds Disposal Panel for allocation. This meant that excavators and museums had to

deal with two different procedures. While the Treasure Trove Panel Secretariat became expert in assessing individual small finds, that of the Finds Disposal Panel (FDP) was more accustomed to dealing with bulk excavation assemblages. As part of Historic Scotland, they also had closer relationships with contracting units. From the point of view of museums, there was also the curiosity that excavation assemblages allocated by the FDP were accompanied by a standard box fee of £10, whereas those created by developer-funded excavations had no such advantage. The merger of the two panels into the Scottish Archaeological Finds Advisory Panel should help to solve this complexity, while the contracts for developer-funded excavations should be altered to include a similar contribution towards the long-term costs of the curation of the finds.

Enhancing museum collections

From the early 1800s to the later 1900s, the main recipient of Treasure Trove finds was the National Museum, though the allocation of gold coins from Castle Cadder, Lanarkshire, to Marischal College, Aberdeen in 1815 (Knight 1810–21) shows that this was not necessarily the case. Collecting by the British Museum was a source of dispute throughout the nineteenth century with arguments about the Hilton of Cadboll stone, the Lewis chesspieces and the Glenlyon brooch ultimately leading to the British Museum ceasing to receive Treasure Trove allocations from Scotland. In 1931, the Director of the Royal Scottish Museum was able to state with certainty that ‘Scottish treasure trove is offered through the agency of the King’s and Lord Treasurer’s Remembrancer to the National Museum of Antiquities. If the authorities there decline the offer, the treasure is then submitted to the Royal Scottish Museum’ (Ward 1931). The St Ninian’s Isle case in 1962–3 further emphasised allocation to the National Museum, though with the development of professionally run museums throughout the country this was increasingly disputed.

In 1969, the Treasure Trove Advisory Panel (TTAP) was established to enable allocation to other museums, though for more than 20 years it was chaired by the Director of the National Museum. By the time that Barbara Crawford was appointed as the first independent chair in 1993, its membership included representatives of other museums and it had ensured allocations to a widening range of museums (Charlie

Murray, pers. comm.) This practice has grown such that very few allocations are now to the National Museums of Scotland: indeed, of the less than 15% allocated to NMS, many are allocated because no other museum was interested in acquiring them (Saville 2002). Even for objects which both NMS and another museum were keen to acquire, NMS was successful in only 38% of cases (Normand 2003, 72). As one of the grounds for allocation is the principle of 'not splitting assemblages', the long-standing collections of NMS mean that it is automatically allocated material from many sites for which it has the major collections, such as Newstead and Dunbar. The result is therefore that, despite the published policies and the results of allocation, the perception is still widespread that most finds are allocated 'to Edinburgh', with many museums and finders considering that NMS has inbuilt advantages. This misconception is probably exacerbated by NMS housing, staffing and advising the Treasure Trove Secretariat.

The latter part of the twentieth century therefore saw a shift towards the belief that the collections of national antiquities are, and should be, held by museums throughout the country rather than solely by the National Museum. As a result, museums have become professionalised, with formal policies and trained staff. Likewise, the allocation of material to museums by the Q<R now follows published criteria (Scottish Executive 1999a) which are followed by the TTAP when making their recommendation. Some of these criteria relate to the basic suitability of the museum (being a Registered museum, having an appropriate collecting policy and the ability to pay the cost of the reward); others to the ability to care for the material (such as the ability to meet conservation requirements, offer research access and to interpret the material for the wider public). Museums now have to write 'bids' to argue their case for being allocated material, with the Panel assessing the quality of these bids and their conformity to the criteria. Just as the term 'Treasure Trove' has monetary connotations, so too does 'bid'. Some people, particularly those in museums run by volunteers, fear that they may be 'outbid' by a wealthier institution. A more helpful term might therefore be 'case'. As most museums fulfil these basic criteria, discussion tends to focus on the other criteria, which relate to not splitting assemblages, access to researchers and the wider public, ensuring local heritage interpretation and the national importance of a find.

As mentioned above, the desire not to split assemblages ensures that, for example, coin hoards are kept together. By including previous finds in the definition of an 'assemblage', it has tended, however, to

perpetuate the existing strengths of museum collections. Definition can also be problematic, such as the example of a group of finds reported by a metal detectorist from St Combs, Aberdeenshire, in which a group of medieval/post-medieval finds from a possible fair site was reported along with a Roman brooch from the same field. Partly due to an agreement between two museums bidding for the material, this 'assemblage' was split, on the grounds that it had been created by the discovery, rather than being the result of archaeologically demonstrable patterns of deposition.

The main area of contention usually relates to the latter two criteria. Is an object primarily of national or local significance? This is most commonly seen in competitive bids between NMS and another museum, most famously in the case of the Later Bronze Age hoard from Corrymuckloch, Perthshire (Hall 1996) which was allocated to NMS rather than the Perth Museum. The criteria are remarkably unhelpful in such cases, noting that 'the key role of the National Museums of Scotland (NMS) will be taken into account in considering allocations of nationally important material' but that 'the allocation of such items to NMS will be by no means automatic. The TTAP will require the NMS to demonstrate fully that there are clear advantages, in serving the national interest, in allocating finds to the NMS rather than another museum' (Scottish Executive 1999a: 7). The powerful feelings in favour of local allocation have been discussed with reference to Hilton of Cadboll and it is striking that many museums would prefer an automatic allocation of items found within 'their' territory.

In most cases, the 'presumption that material should be allocated locally unless there is a convincing argument for allocating it elsewhere' is, however, followed. Indeed, increasingly competition for allocation is between 'local' museums, rather than between NMS and a local museum. Unfortunately, there are no published figures about the number of competitive cases between museums not involving NMS, but a common pattern is competition between a museum in a regional centre (e.g. Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness) and a independent museum in a small town (e.g. Tain, Kilmartin) or a local authority service covering a largely rural area (e.g. Aberdeenshire). With local government reorganisation, it can now be harder for most city museums to claim a regional role, as the local authority's geographical remit is now more restricted and local identities have become stronger. The strength of feeling that can emerge from allocation to a city museum can be just as strong as that raised by allocation to the National Museum. Likewise, at a more

local level, similar tensions can appear, such as between Kirkwall and the outlying islands in Orkney (Anne Brundle, pers. comm.). Concordats between museums can help to limit such problems, such as that agreed between Aberdeen City Council, the Aberdeenshire Council, the Moray Council and the University of Aberdeen. That concordat acknowledges the overlapping collecting areas of the various museums and has established a procedure in which potentially competing bids are discussed informally before they are submitted to the TTAP. This has worked well with, for example, Marischal Museum not normally bidding for medieval/post-medieval finds and Aberdeenshire Heritage generally not bidding for prehistoric/early historic material. Nonetheless, if an agreement is not possible, competing bids can be submitted, amicably, to the TTAP for decision.

Just as an 'assemblage' can be difficult to define, so too can 'local'. Is mere proximity adequate or do patterns of transport and local identity have to be taken into account? What about the value of regional or thematic perspectives in interpretation? Also, just as in the nineteenth-century Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries from throughout Scotland enthusiastically donated items to 'their' museum in Edinburgh, local allocation is not necessarily welcomed by everyone living locally. No matter how well-defined the criteria are, there will always be a need for an independent body, such as the TTAP, to judge between possible allocations.

While there is no doubt about the Crown's ownership of antiquities, there is more dubiety about the ownership of human remains and bulk soil samples. As it is normally considered that unaltered human remains remain ownerless, they are not treated as Crown property, instead being allocated alongside material that has been claimed. Although treated in a similar way, bulk soil samples are more problematic, as they could be considered to be part of the land and thus the property of the landowner. As such samples can form a large part of the excavation archive, their long-term curation can have significant resource implications for museums. If it is not clear to whom title rests, are museums obliged to keep such material that is often considered to be of little long-term archaeological value?

One of the aims of allocation to museums is to ensure 'that objects claimed as Treasure Trove remain in the public domain and are preserved in perpetuity in publicly accessible collections' (Scottish Executive 1999a, 3). Museums share this aim, with the Museums Association's definition of museums stating that 'they hold [collections] in trust for

society' (Museums Association 2002, 1). As a result, all Registered/Accredited museums have disposal policies that restrict their ability to dispose of material, usually ensuring that anything to be de-accessioned is first offered to other registered museums rather than sold. Nonetheless, title to museum collections rests with their governing body which, if it chose to, could de-Register a museum and alter its disposal policy to allow the sale of items. While such an action would be considered to be unethical, and would prevent any future Treasure Trove allocations, it would be legal. It is unclear, however, whether allocation by Q<R constitutes a transfer of title from the Crown to museum or whether title rests with the Crown with the museum merely caring for an object on loan. If the former, the Crown might have the right to demand the return of items previously allocated if a museum attempted to sell them or if it failed to retain Registered status. If the latter view is taken, should museums be compensated for the long-term costs of curation on behalf of the Crown? Similarly, does the decision by the Crown not to claim an item offered for consideration as Treasure Trove by the issuing of a certificate of 'No Claim' equate to the transfer of title from Crown to finder? If not, would the Crown be able to claim the object in the future?

Conclusion

The Treasure Trove system has provided a mechanism for museums to acquire and care for archaeological finds over the past 200 years. Recent changes in administration have meant that it now covers all archaeological finds and benefits many more museums than happened in the nineteenth century. Procedures have become much fairer and more transparent, while the Secretariat who administer the system have directly contributed to archaeological understanding, such as identifying medieval fair sites and developing unrivalled expertise in finds identification.

Rather than seeing this as simply the gradual improvement of a system, this paper has tried to show the changes to be the result of both specific historical circumstances and a tendency to conservatism. The development of archaeology as a discipline and profession saw the development of a belief that antiquities could only be properly understood by archaeologists and thus the use of Treasure Trove to create a mechanism by which all such finds could be claimed for archaeological research.

Many of the challenges to the system today—from metal detectorists, numismatists and community museums—come from an opposition to that viewpoint, preferring to highlight other forms of knowledge and understanding. These tensions should therefore be seen as a product of the long-standing failure of archaeologists to prioritise work with the public. The under-funding of the system is a result of this lack of public support, which has exacerbated problems. For example, a public leaflet and poster about the system was awaited throughout my Panel membership and has still not appeared. The example of the Portable Antiquities Scheme south of the Border shows the impact of a well-funded outreach scheme on both the public interest in antiquities and in the recording of finds. The over-worked Secretariat and the handful of museum archaeologists cannot achieve anything comparable. With ignorance and under-funding the main problems, it is worth considering whether too much is being asked of the system.

The Treasure Trove system has clearly saved individual finds from being ‘mere matters of idle curiosity and wild conjecture’ by bringing them into museums ‘beside their fellows’. Until recently, these ‘fellows’ were all in the National Museum. Only recently have the interests of finders being brought into consideration, such as the survey of finders in the recent review (Normand 2003), and the history and workings of the system begun to be seen from perspectives other than those of the Society of Antiquaries, the National Museum and those administering the Treasure Trove system. As part of the interface between discovery and interpretation, the place of Treasure Trove in Scottish archaeology needs greater understanding. Not only has it created a rich resource for archaeological research, it is a critical feature of the development of archaeology in Scotland into a discipline and profession with a particular sense of its national and local identities. The Treasure Trove procedure needs to be treated as much more than a stray word in the story of Scottish archaeology.

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EARLY MEDIEVAL SCULPTURE FROM THE FAROES: AN ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE

Ian Fisher and Ian G. Scott

Introduction

In 1930 the distinguished Manx archaeologist Philip Kermode, en route to and from Iceland, briefly visited the small museum in Tórshavn where he saw six cross-marked stones from the island of Skuvoy.¹ In the following year he published measured drawings, based on rubbings and photographs supplied by museum curator M. A. Jacobsen, with very brief comments on some of the stones (Kermode 1931, 373–8). Kermode described the burial-ground on Skuvoy, mentioning the cross-marked stone there which was believed to mark the grave of the local chieftain Sigmund Brestisson, who began the conversion of the islands at the end of the tenth century. He added that ‘other slabs were found [there], which are not yet in the Museum’ (*ibid.*, 377). Following correspondence with Dr Poul Norlund, director of the National Museum in Copenhagen, he included photographs of two stones in its collection, one of them from Skuvoy and the other an unprovenanced slab which was also believed to be of Faroese basalt. A chance meeting with Joannes Patursson of Kirkjubøur allowed Kermode to include a drawing of one slab from that historic site (*ibid.*, 373 and fig. 1, no. 1). The Copenhagen museum archive also provided a stylised drawing dated 1828 of a lost slab, then at the church on Svinoy (*ibid.*, 378). Jacobsen himself published an article on the Skuvoy stones in Faroese in 1933.

Since then these stones have been briefly mentioned in connection with the question of possible Irish hermit occupation of the Faroes before the Norse *landnam* (Dahl 1970). In his consideration of this subject Arge (1991) illustrated photographs of two of the stones. In a work on western Scottish sculpture published in 2001, the present writer drew attention to the remarkable similarity between Kermode’s

¹ Kermode (1931, fig. 1 on p. 374) claimed to illustrate seven crosses from Skuvoy, but his nos. 2 and 7 are two faces of the same pillar (*infra*, no.(10)).

unprovenanced slab in Copenhagen and another at the Hebridean monastic site of Iona. No other early medieval stones from the archipelago have been published in English-language sources, except for the rune-stones described by Stoklund (2005).

The Fourteenth Viking Congress, held in Tórshavn in July 2001, brought together a large international group of scholars including Barbara Crawford. They were able to examine Kermodé's six cross-marked stones from Skuvoy and six others from the same site, all then on display in the National Museum of the Faroes (Føroya Fornminnisav). A fragmentary outline cross with runic inscription from the same island (Arge 1982) was discussed in a Congress lecture by Marie Stoklund (2005). The Skuvoy burial-ground itself, and the cross-marked boulder supposed to mark Sigmund Brestisson's grave, were visited by many of the delegates. During the excursion to Kirkjubøur mention was made of the cross-slab from the *Líkhús* (Arge 1991, 104–5), now stored in the medieval bishop's palace, which had been drawn by Kermodé. The discovery of another cross-marked stone, found in the floor of a building at Sandur during excavations, was described in Símun Arge's lecture. The present writer compared the unprovenanced slab in Copenhagen with its counterpart on Iona, but this seemingly strong evidence for early Irish activity was immediately refuted by the state antiquary, Arne Thorsteinsson. Geological examination during the re-cataloguing of Faroese material in Copenhagen has shown that the stone is of gneiss rather than basalt, and therefore not Faroese in origin (see below, appendix).

The writer was able to examine the Skuvoy stones in Tórshavn on St Olaf's Day 2001. Following the return of many Faroese artefacts from Copenhagen in 2002, the stones, with the exception of the rune-inscribed fragment, were transferred to the museum store. They were re-examined there in 2003, with assistance from Símun Arge, through whose good offices the Kirkjubøur slab was also examined, by kind permission of the present Joannes Patursson. A brief stay on Skuvoy allowed further examination of Sigmund Brestisson's stone, as well as shielings which illustrate the extensive resources of its medieval economy. The stone found at Sandur is known only from a published photograph. The two stones in Copenhagen were examined in the National Museum store in March 2006, through the kind offices of Marie Stoklund, Vivian Etting and Anne Pedersen.

The writer gave a very brief indication of the complexity of this material in the publication of the *Papar* conference organised by Barbara Crawford at St Andrews in 2001 (Fisher 2002, 39–40, 57). He included

an almost equally brief classification of the carvings, with references to Irish and Scottish comparisons, in the Viking Congress paper on 'Cross-currents in North Atlantic Sculpture' (Fisher 2005). The present catalogue is only the groundwork for the detailed comparative study and firm conclusions that the recipient of this volume would wish to see. However, it is a necessary preliminary stage if the apparent conflict between early Irish stylistic comparisons and the historiography of the Norse conversion is to be resolved. It is believed that this is the first complete illustrated catalogue of the Faroese early medieval corpus to be published. It is to be hoped that it will soon be outdated by the vigilance of the tradition-loving people and skilled archaeologists of this remarkable North Atlantic archipelago.

Catalogue

Bracketed numbers at the heads of descriptions refer to Illus. 39.

FF: Føroya Fornminnisavni catalogue-number

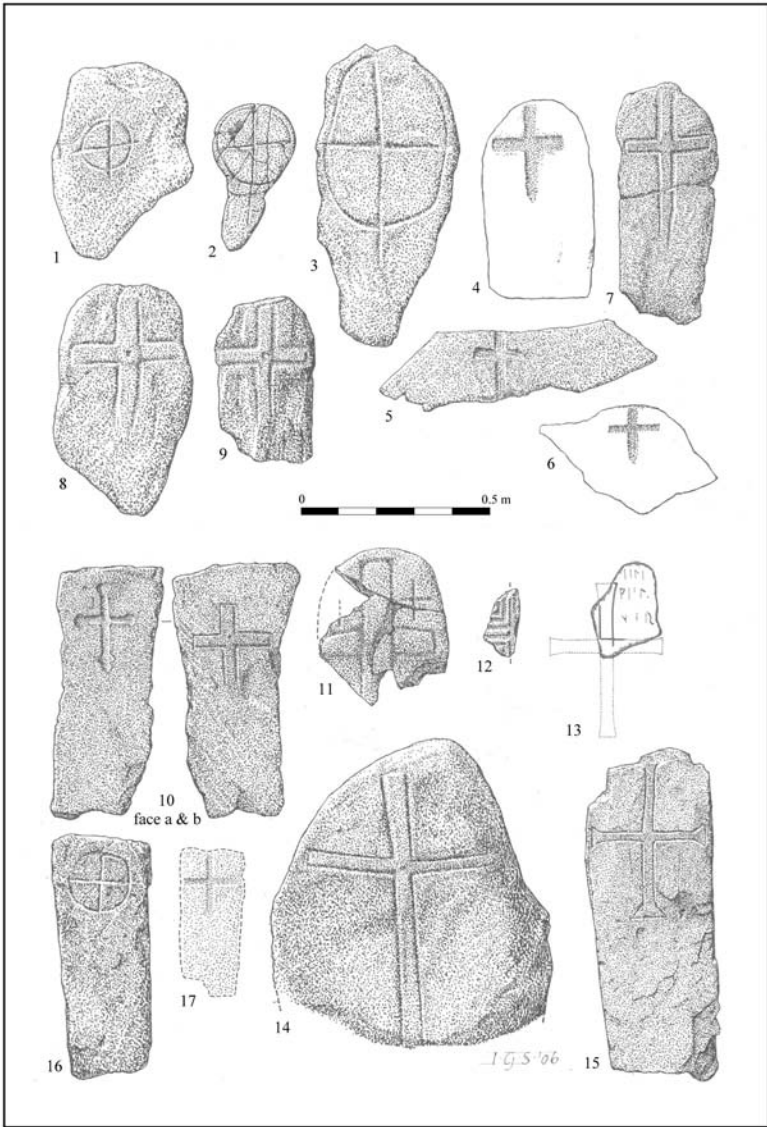
Kirkjubøur

Encircled linear cross

(16) This stone is now preserved in the massive stone-built undercroft of the medieval bishop's palace, below the timber hall or *roykstova*. Kermodé (1930, 376), reported that it was found 'in the cemetery, close to the oldest church-wall', and this is believed to refer to the fragmentary *Líkhús* or mortuary chapel, which stands at the cliff-edge 105 m ESE of the medieval cathedral (Arge 1991, 104–5).² This may have been the *ecclesia sancti Brandani* ('St Brendan's Church') whose foundations were laid in or just before 1420 (Krogh 1988, 77, 86–7, 104). A former inlet to the south, now obliterated by coastal erosion but still recognisable in 1781–2, was then named by Svabo as *Brandarsvíg*, and may include the saint's name (*ibid.*, 106–9).³

² The description 'old wall' is used for both buildings in Lyngbye's drawing of 1817 (Krogh 1988, 11), and the cathedral ruin is commonly known in Faroese as *Múrurin*, 'the wall'.

³ The figure of an abbot saint holding a torch, also identified as the navigator saint, appears on an end-panel of the lectern in the famous woodwork which was returned to the Faroes in 2002 (Krogh 1988, 69, 103–9, 119).



Illus. 39 Early medieval sculpture from the Faroes (scale 1:20): 1–15, Skuvoy (13 after Arge); 16, Kirkjubøur; 17, Sandur, Sandoy. (Drawings by I. G. Scott)

The carved stone is a slightly tapered slab of basalt, incised in the smooth but undulating upper part with an encircled equal-armed linear cross. The slab is 0.66 m long and varies in width and thickness from 0.27 m by 90 mm at the top to 0.21 m by 120 mm at the base. The somewhat irregular circle varies from 60 mm to 70 mm in diameter, and the worn grooves are slightly rounded, but not so noticeably as in many of the stones from Skuvoy. There is no evidence for the slight projection of the lower and left arms beyond the ring as shown by Kermode, who knew the slab only from a rubbing. (Kermode 1931, 374 fig. 1 (1)).

*Stones from Skuvoy*⁴

Føroya Fornminnissavn, store—Encircled linear crosses

(1) A cross incised on an irregular lump of basalt which measures 0.53 m by 0.38 m and 0.26 m thick. The tapered part of the slab was probably the foot, as shown by Kermode. At the centre of the smoothest face there is a linear equal-armed cross with all four arms projecting 15–20 mm beyond a slightly irregular circle about 130 mm in diameter. The incision forms a firm V-shaped groove up to 10 mm wide, but possible flaking has widened the upper part of the shaft. (FF 1818; Kermode 1931, 374 fig. 1 (3); Fisher 2005, 163 fig. 5).

(2) An encircled cross on a disc-headed slab of smooth orange-red tuff, reconstructed from numerous fragments. Eleven of these are visible in the main face where there are at least four significant gaps, mainly round the edges. The disc at least appears to be of natural origin, although in its damaged condition it is difficult to verify this. The slab measures 0.40 m in height by 0.22 m in diameter in the head, and 0.10 m thick. The widest surviving part of the shaft is about 90 mm wide and it tapers to a rounded foot. In the head there is an almost equal-armed incised cross in an irregular circle, 210 mm by 200 mm. Its shaft extends about 105 mm below the circle, the lower part being less clearly defined. It is unlikely that the other terminals crossed the circle, although this is uncertain at the top where the surface is broken. (FF 1843).

⁴ For the archaeological context of the burial-ground, where most of the stones were found during enclosure-works in 1909–10 and 1921–22, see Kermode 1931, 377; Arge 1991, 104–5.

(3) A large 'encircled' cross occupying the upper two-thirds of a round-headed and roughly tapered slab of basalt which contains some gas-bubbles. The slab is 0.81 m high by 0.38 m in maximum width, at the level of the transom of the cross, and 0.14 m thick. The carved surface rises slightly to a central ridge along the line of the shaft. The cross, which is defined by V-section grooves 15–20 mm wide, is contained in an irregular oval 0.46 m high by 0.31 m across, and the transom is set at about mid-height. The shaft is prolonged below for about 60 mm, and the other arms appear to extend beyond the oval for a few millimetres although Kermode does not illustrate this feature.

(FF 1817; Kermode 1931, 374 fig. 1 (4); Arge 1991, 104, fig. 1B).

Shallow sunken crosses (see also no. 10a)

(4) A Latin cross carved on the end-face of a rounded boulder of basalt. This measures 0.64 m wide by 0.56 m high and 0.32 m thick and contains many minute holes caused by gas-bubbles. The cross-marked end-face is about 0.52 m high by 0.30 m wide and the cross occupies the upper part, which curves slightly at the top. It is defined by very shallow grooves, segmental rather than U-shaped and 30–40 mm wide. These appear to have been started with a sharp tool of which some long impressions remain, and were polished with a rounded tool, perhaps a pebble. The resulting carving is so shallow that it is difficult to define the upper terminal of the cross on the curving surface, but it measures about 0.28 m high by 0.18 m in span. The left side-arm appears to be at least 20 mm longer than the other, which has a more definite square terminal. The shaft is slightly tapered, and pointed at the foot.

(FF 2028).

(5) A Latin cross carved on the long face of a horizontal slab of basalt which is broken obliquely at both ends and roughly pointed at the back. The slab measures 0.74 m wide by 0.24 m high and 0.25 m to 0.40 m thick, and in areas where medieval masonry building was more common than in the Faroes it might well be identified as a lintel. The roughly vertical front face measures 0.66 m wide by 0.15 m high, and the cross is carved at its centre in the same technique as no.(4). Impressions of the initial incisions have not been entirely removed by polishing, especially in the transom. It measures 160 mm high by 115 mm in span, with grooves 25–30 mm wide. Its shaft is tapered, but the base and top, which extend to the edges of the smooth face, are open.

The right terminal is so shallow that its shape is uncertain, while the left terminal is slightly rounded.

(FF 1820).

(6) A Latin cross carved on an irregular quadrangular boulder of basalt, 0.57 m wide by 0.38 m high and 0.29 m thick. The only flat face measures 0.49 m by 0.30 m, and the cross is set in the upper part on its longest axis. It is carved with very shallow curved grooves, 25–30 mm wide, which retain some traces of preliminary incisions, and measures 185 mm high by 130 mm in span. The arms have square terminals, while the foot is pointed and the shaft appears to be slightly intaken just below the transom.

(FF 1821).

Outline crosses

(7) An outline Latin cross carved in the upper part of a roughly rectangular slab of basalt, broken across and measuring 0.64 m high by 0.26 m wide. The cross is defined by U-section grooves about 15 mm wide and measures 0.41 m high by 0.22 m in span. The arms are about 30 mm thick and have square terminals near the edges of the slab. The lower part of the shaft tapers slightly, but flaking makes it uncertain whether the foot was originally open or pointed.

(FF 1815; Kermode 1931, 374 fig. 1 (5); Arge 1991, 104, fig. 1B).

(8) An outline Latin cross carved on a roughly tapered slab of basalt with many gas-bubbles, 0.62 m high by 0.38 m wide and 0.12 m thick. The cross is 0.35 m high by 0.27 m in span, and arms 40–50 mm wide are defined by grooves which appear to have been cut to a V-section, then polished to a U-section as in stones (4–6). The arms are closed at the ends, whereas the tapered foot appears to be open. At the top right there are some slight curving marks, which have been interpreted as the loop of a Chi-rho (J Sheehan, lecture to Fifteenth Viking Congress, 2005). However, such an appendage would be unusual with a cross of this type, and the marks appear to be of natural origin.

(FF 1814; Kermode 1931, 374 fig. 1 (6)).

(9) An outline cross carved on a roughly rectangular slab of basalt, 0.43 m high by 0.24 m wide and 0.10 m in maximum thickness. It contains many gas-bubbles and the surface is flaked in places. The Latin cross

is 0.26 m high and 0.20 m in span, and has arms about 30 mm wide within U-shaped grooves. The arms have square terminals but the foot is open. At the centre of the cross-head is a depression 8 mm in diameter, which appears to be artificial.

(FF 1819; Kermod 1931, 374 fig. 1 (8)).

(10) Two crosses carved on the smoother faces of a basalt pillar of triangular section, 0.77 m in height by 0.29 m by 0.31 m by 0.34 m.

(a) (Kermod 1931, 374 fig. 1 (2)). A sunken cross defined by shallow U-shaped grooves up to 25 mm wide. It is 0.24 m high by 0.16 m in span, including circular terminals 30 mm in diameter. The lower terminal has been damaged by flaking, but may be of trefoil form.

(b) (Kermod 1931, 374 fig. 1 (7)). An outline cross, 0.21 m in height and span, with the transom set a little above mid-height of the shaft. The arms are 35–40 mm wide within firm V-shaped grooves, but a depression at the centre appears to be the result of flaking, which has also affected the side terminals. The foot appears to be open, but is much worn.

(FF 1816).

(11) Three irregular fragments of pink-red tuff. One of them (a) shows a curve which may be an original rounded top, and measures 0.15 m high by 0.30 m wide and 120 mm in maximum thickness. It is not certain whether this is the original thickness of the slab, since the back is broken obliquely. The other fragments (b, c) are surface-flakes which overlap closely along a recent oblique break, whereas fragment (a) was separated from them by a few millimetres and its broken lower edge is worn. Fragment (b), which formed the left half of the broken piece, measures 0.30 m by 0.21 m and is 60 mm thick. Fragment (c) measures 0.21 m by 0.21 m and is 30 mm thick. Fragment (a) bears broad (15–20 mm) grooves defining the shaft of a cross, which is about 70 mm wide and has a slightly curved terminal. To the right there is the upper part, including the transom, of an incised cross. The shaft continues onto the lower fragments (b) and (c), where it overlies a transverse cross-arm on each fragment. Both arms, which measure about 110 mm in length, have horizontal lower edges, but their upper edges taper down to slightly rounded terminals so that their heights are about 70 mm at the shaft and 45 mm at the ends. Both surface-flakes also show vertical grooves,

evidently the lowest part of the incised cross at the right of the shaft on fragment (a), and of a corresponding cross to the left. It is probable that these were equal-armed crosses about 100 mm in span. (FF 1825).

Moulded fragment

(12) This fragment of fine-grained orange-brown tuff is the only carving dealt with here that does not clearly bear a cross, although so little of the pattern is preserved that this is uncertain. It measures 200 mm in length, of which 40 mm is a flaked surface, by 95 mm and 60 mm in maximum thickness. It bears a dividing bar or cross-arm, separated by a thin groove from a transverse margin or cross-arm. This is plain, whereas the other bar has slightly chamfered edges. At each side there is a nest of crisply-cut L-shaped mouldings, three at the right and two at the left and all with chamfered edges. The lower 'margin' is sunk about 5 mm below the flat tops of the mouldings, and the central bar is also slightly sunk, making it less likely that they are parts of a cross. Dr John Sheehan, in a lecture to the Fifteenth Viking Congress in 2005, compared the L-shaped mouldings in the upper angles of a cross on Skellig Michael (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, 280, fig.180(b); 288 (36)). However, the recessing and separation of the possible cross-arms may lessen the relevance of this parallel. (FF 1822).

Føroya Fornminnisavni, upstairs display—Outline cross

(13) In 1982 a fragment of a cross-slab bearing part of a runic inscription was found on the shore near the harbour, about 500 m N of the churchyard. It appears to be the upper right corner of a slab of basalt, 0.25 m high by 0.17 m and 70 mm thick. It bears the top arm and part of the transom of an outline cross with expanded terminals. The defining lines are incised rather than round-grooved, and intersect to form a square central 'boss'. An incomplete three-line runic inscription is carved in the presumed upper right quadrant, although Stoklund notes that the lines may have run vertically and that the surviving arm may have been part of the transom. She transcribes the definite letters as: **...isli/ ...gisl(a)/ ...mer**, noting that 'there is, however, no safe basis for an interpretation'. (Arge 1982; Stoklund 2005, 116–17 (FR5)).

Burial-ground, Skuvoy—Outline cross

(14) The cross-marked boulder associated with the grave of the hero Sigmund Brestisson stands near the west boundary of the burial-ground. The tradition was recorded in a drawing donated in 1822 to the antiquarian collection in Copenhagen by the young English traveller Walter Calverley Trevelyan.⁵ Its lightly-sketched landscape background may suggest that the main face originally faced north. It now faces south, but this appears to be a fairly recent change of position (information from Arne Thorsteinsson). Investigation by the state antiquary in 2001 established that only about 60 mm of the stone is below the turf-line. It is an irregular slab of local basalt, set on edge and roughly pointed at the top, 0.78 m high by 0.76 m wide and tapering in thickness from 0.36 m at base to 0.11 m near the top. The shaft of the cross runs to the very base of the stone and it is probably incomplete. The outline Latin cross, whose arms are 30–40 mm wide and slightly rounded at the ends, has a span of 0.49 m, the right arm being inclined slightly upwards. The upper part of the slab is covered with lichen, but the top arm appears to extend to about 2 mm from the top edge. (Fisher 2005, 162–63).

Copenhagen, National Museum of Denmark store—Outline cross

(15) The drawing showing Sigmund Brestisson's stone also illustrates a second cross-marked slab, apparently lying near the first, which was brought to Copenhagen in 1842 (Stoklund 2005, 116). It is an almost rectangular slab of basalt, irregularly broken at the top and with naturally bevelled edges. It measures 0.89 m in overall length by 0.34 m in width and tapers in thickness from 220 mm at the base to 120 mm at the top. The upper half of the intact surface, which is 0.81 m long and 0.31 m wide, is filled with an outline cross lacking most of the top terminal but otherwise complete, although the lower right part of the slab is much flaked. The cross itself is somewhat irregular, its upper arm inclining slightly to the right and not being exactly aligned with the lower shaft. It measures 400 mm in incomplete height by 285 mm

⁵ *Antiquariske Annaler*, 4 (1827), 207–8, noting donations by 'Hr. Trevelyan fra Northumberland' who had spent four months in the Faroes in 1821. The drawing was numbered 577, and the other donations were a flat stone (*en slevet flad steen*) found in a bog (*mose*) in Shetland, and a rubbing (*aftryk*) of the inscribed relic-cover in the east wall of the cathedral at Kirkjubour. I am grateful to Dr Marie Stoklund for providing this reference and a copy of the drawing. For Trevelyan, see Wawn 2005, 52–3, and *DNB*.

in span, the transom being set 190 mm from the base and probably at about the original mid-height. The vertical arms are about 30 mm and the transom 20 mm in thickness, within slightly rounded grooves, and the triangular lower and side terminals are respectively 75 mm and 60 mm in width at base, the former being 35 mm high. Two rune-like incisions in the upper right quadrant were interpreted by C. C. Rafn in 1843 as the initials of the names of Sigmund Brestisson's two sons, but they are described by Stoklund (2005, 116) as 'owners' marks', and there is no reason to think that they were original features. (Kermode 1931, 375, 377).

Sandur, Sandoy—Linear cross

(17) The churchyard at Sandur lies on a peninsula west of the inlet Sandsvágur, in an area of extensive early settlement (Arge *et al.*, 2005, 612–13). Excavations by Knud Krogh produced a sequence of six timber churches, which probably began early in the 11th century, like some of the adjacent structures in the churchyard. A cross-marked stone was identified in the stone footing of one of the latter buildings but remains *in situ*, so the following description is based on the published photograph. The slab is roughly rectangular, with the lower left corner broken off, and measures 0.40 m long by 0.17 m wide. The Latin cross appears to be formed by rounded grooves, although these are not so deep as in the sunken crosses described above. It measures about 0.17 m in height by 0.15 m in span, the top and side terminals extending to the edges of the slab, and it is possible that the base was expanded as in the sunken cross from Skuvoy (10a). (Krogh 1975, 49).

Svinoy—?sunken cross

Kermode (1931, 378) published a sketch of a lost stone from the church on the northern island of Svinoy, based on a drawing of 1828 in the National Museum of Denmark, which itself could not be located in 2006 (information from M. Stoklund). This stone is said to have been locally known as 'Bjarnisteinur', after the local chieftain Bjorn or Bjarni, who according to the saga was involved in the killing of Sigmund's father Bresti (Schmeissner 1979, 86–9). The dimensions are not stated, but the slab was tapered and bore in the upper part a Latin cross, possibly sunken, with slightly expanded terminals. The lowest of these appears to be shown as an incised triangle enclosing the base of the shaft. In the lower part there were two groups of five parallel lines,

crossing in a saltire. While the cross appears to show some resemblance in outline to the one from Skuvoy in Copenhagen (no. 15), the regular taper suggests that the stone may have been a recumbent graveslab of late medieval date.

(Kermode 1931, 378).

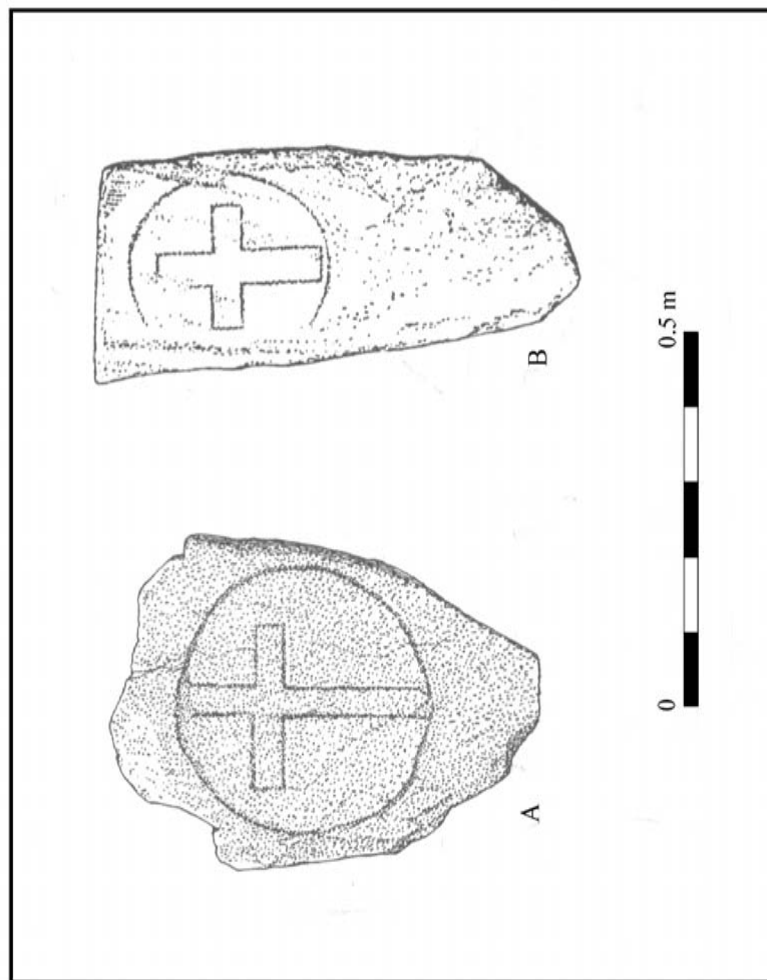
APPENDIX: A possible Hebridean cross-slab in the National Museum of Denmark (Illus. 40)

Encircled outline cross

Kermode (1931, 375, 377) published a photograph of a slab in Copenhagen, 'of uncertain provenance' but said to be of basalt like 'the other Faroe slabs'. It bears an outline Latin cross in a circle, which closely resembles that on a stone on Iona (Fisher 2001, figs. 22*C*, 33*K*). However, at the Fourteenth Viking Congress held some weeks after the publication of this comparison, Arne Thorsteinsson announced that recent geological examination had identified the material as gneiss, so that it could not be Faroese. The stone was examined in February 2006, in the same museum store as the slab from Skuvoy (no. 15).

The slab is of gneiss, largely pink and grey in colour and showing characteristic banding in the edges. It measures 0.58 m in length by 0.44 m in maximum width, including a natural bevel of 30 mm at the right and a large undercut bevel at the left, and tapers from 130 mm in thickness at the foot to 75 mm at the top. It is of irregular outline, tapering to the foot fairly evenly at the right, but showing breaks at the upper and lower left. The carved face is fairly even but bears some vertical exfoliation, created long before the carving was made, and there are small areas of later flaking. Both the circle and the cross are defined by small shallow peck-marks, which in the former particularly are multiplied to make the carving visible on the intractable material. It has a diameter of 330 mm, while the cross is 310 mm high, leaving a gap of only a few mm between its top and the inner edge of the circle. Its foot touched the circle and appears to have been tapered, but is partly flaked. The cross has a span of 215 mm, the transom being set 200 mm above the base, and the arms are 35 mm to 40 mm in width.

Both the motif and the material suggest a Hebridean origin, for the stone on Iona is an otherwise unique example of an outline Latin cross within a circle, although somewhat different in its proportions. This slab of Torridonian flagstone is 0.64 m long and bears a 270 mm circle



Illus. 40 Encircled outline crosses (scale 1:10): A, Copenhagen, unprovenanced; B, Iona no.24 (Crown copyright: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland).

drawn from the centre of the cross-head so that the gap above is about 38 mm and there is also a slight gap at the foot. Its arms are about 45 mm wide, giving sturdier proportions. It is likely that the Copenhagen stone is based on a memory of the Iona one, or that they shared a common model. However, the former is unlikely to have been carved on Iona itself, for although the island is composed largely of Lewisian gneiss, this was never used for the simpler cross-marked stones which are predominantly of the local Torridonian or schists from Mull. Gneiss is also the dominant rock on the adjacent islands of Coll and Tiree, and on the latter, which had strong Columban connections, it was used for several early medieval carvings (Fisher 2001, 123–5, nos. 264, 276(3), 310, 325, 327). While it would be interesting to identify a carving from Coll, for which early stones are at present not recorded, Tiree, with its Columban house of *Magh Luinge* or *Campus Lunge*, seems a far likelier provenance. The Outer Hebrides are suitable on geological grounds but lack this documented Columban connection, although it is possible that the *papar*-sites may yield further evidence of this.

In 1930 Poul Norlund wrote to Kermode that ‘we do not know anything about it [the stone in Copenhagen] with certainty’ (Kermode 1931, 377), and it allows a wealth of speculation. It cannot be discounted that it did indeed reach the Danish capital from the Faroes, after serving as spiritual ballast in the boat of an early hermit. But more likely is its importation on the tide of Scandinavian antiquarian enthusiasm for the Hebrides, associated from the late eighteenth century onwards with the great names of Thorkelin, Worsaae and Munch. Whether it was transported by a private collector, or with the approval or initiative of a landowner, perhaps the Duke of Argyll himself, may be revealed by further work in the abundant archives of Copenhagen or Inveraray. (Fisher 2001, fig. 22C; 2005, 162).

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Fieldwork as far north as Unst has been shared with my former RCAHMS colleague, Ian G. Scott, and in transforming my graphic material for publication he pays his own tribute to Barbara's support and interest. My debt to friends in the Faroes and Denmark is evident above. Joannes Patursson, the 'king's farmer' of Kirkjubøur, welcomed me to his historic home and assisted the recording of his ancient stone; Arne Thorsteinsson, Símun Arge, and Steffen Stumman Hansen have all been generous to an interloper on ground they know so well; Marie Stoklund and her colleagues allowed me to make the most of a brief visit to Copenhagen, and introduced me to the rich (but not unfailing) documentation of the national collections. John Sheehan has helped both by sharing his insights into the sculpture and by his organisation of the Fifteenth Viking Congress at Cork in August 2005. Finally, Beverley Ballin Smith has been an unfailingly supportive and patient editor.

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Addendum

Eysturoy

A small slab was found about 1930 near the *Bonhús* or chapel at Leirvík, and was lost soon after. A sketch made from memory shows an irregular slab, about 0.55 m by 0.50 m, bearing an encircled linear cross about 0.33 m in diameter. (Stummann Hansen, S. 2006 *I korsets tegn: Kristendommen i Leirvíks ældste historie*. Leirvík. 17–18).

Fugloy

A fragmentary slab of tuff, 0.84 m by 0.83 m, was found in 2002 at the church and is now in Føroya Fornminnisavni. It bears an incomplete Latin cross, 0.31 m high by 0.26 m, with wedge-shaped arms deeply sunk within a frame of similar outline. The centres of the side and top arms are hollowed out. (Stummann Hansen, *op. cit.*, 18–19; photograph provided by S. V. Arge).

LIMINALITY AND LOSS:
THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF ST SERF'S PRIORY,
LOCH LEVEN, KINROSS-SHIRE, SCOTLAND

Mark A. Hall

Introduction

St Serf's Priory (NGR NO1615 0025), also known as the Priory of Lochleven, survives as a ruin on the largest island in Loch Leven, St Serf's Island (see, Illus. 63). It is a low, flat-lying island in the south-east corner of the Loch, which has doubled in size since the lowering of the Loch's water-level around 1830 (Munro 1994, 89–90). In terms of the Priory situation the ruins are now further away from the shoreline than formerly. The ruins were the subject of a recent survey by the RCAHMS (Cameron in prep.), which suggests that the date of the church should be reassigned from the thirteenth to the mid-to-late eleventh century. This survey is the most significant—and overdue—examination of St Serf's since the two mid nineteenth-century investigations conducted under the aegis of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland (Annan 1862 and Kerr 1882). The work carried out by the Society included excavations in 1877, which informed Kerr's paper but were never fully published. The medieval finds as they survive, along with supplementary and related finds made since the 1870s, are published in detail here for the first time and linked to a brief assessment of the monastic community and some of the lost material culture from the Priory.

Origins and St Serf

St Serf is generally accepted as a genuine ecclesiastic (possibly a bishop), probably Pictish (possibly British), most recently discussed by Macquarrie in his analysis (1993, 1997) of the *Vita Sancti Servani* (*The Life of St Serf*), who suggests a likely *floruit* of around 700, an affirmation of Watson's view (1926, 332–3), which in turn was influenced by Skene 1867. This date is generally accepted by scholars, each with their subtleties of analysis and emphasis (notably Taylor 1996, 100–1; Veitch 1998;

Clancy 2004 and Watson 2002, 476–82). St Serf's, Loch Leven, has a pivotal position in the debate about St Serf himself. 'The priory register of St Andrews contains copies of a number of early notes relating to the Céli Dé of Lochleven, which it claims are translations... from an old book written in Gaelic... The first of them states that the island in Loch Leven was given to St Serf by Brude f. Dergard...' (Pictish king) 'and that the Céli Dé of that place came to an agreement with Fothad f. Bran, bishop of St Andrews. A bishop of that name is recorded in the mid tenth century so we can reasonably conclude that Lochleven was in existence before c. 950...' (Macquarrie 1997, 152). The king, Bruide son of Dargart, died in 706 (Clancy 2004, 130). Macquarrie makes a convincing argument (based on textual and scriptural evidence) for Culross as St Serf's principal monastic establishment and pre-dating Lochleven (a question discussed further by Watson 2002, 476–82). One of the later priors of St Serf's, Andrew de Wyntoun, wrote his *Orygynale Cronykil* there in the fifteenth century and included in it details of St Serf, which Macquarrie argues (1997, 149–50) used sources at hand in the Priory. Wyntoun's account and the *VS* agree that Culross was the primary church and place of burial and imply that St Serf's was a daughter/subordinate church of Culross (*ibid.*, 152). Macquarrie concluded (tentatively) that the development of the parochia of St Serf, centred on Culross, might have been in succession to the flight of the Anglian bishop, Trumwine, from his seat at Abercorn, after 685 (*ibid.*, 156). He suggests that Bishop Serf organised the new church in-line with Gaelic practice but Taylor (1996, 101) makes a more plausible case based on placenames and the Rome episode in the *VS* that Serf would have reorganised the church 'under Roman and Pictish lines and under the close scrutiny of the Pictish kings.' It seems probable that St Serf's Lochleven was established before the 10th century. This early church is not though reflected in the surface remains of the Priory, further excavation is needed to clarify its existence.

By the eleventh century the ecclesiastical linkages of St Serf's Priory had changed as by then the church was under the authority of the bishopric of St Andrews (see Cameron in prep. for architectural links). Bishop Robert transferred it to St Andrews Priory c. 1150, a grant confirmed by David I on condition that the Augustinian rule was introduced. Earlier royal patronage included a significant endowment from Macbeth and his Queen, Gruoch, in the mid eleventh century. Subsequent centuries saw further grants from the bishops of St Andrews (Dilworth 1995, 56 and see discussion below).

Lost Material Culture

The fate of much of the artefactual evidence recovered from or close to St Serf's Priory makes for a rather sad account but nevertheless it is hoped that this catalogue of what survives can make a useful contribution to any future research framework and exploration of the Priory. The main problem underlying the surviving finds is that they are unstratified, with no firmer provenance than the Priory ruins.

St Serf's material culture would, of course, have included books and manuscripts. While we can no longer accept the books named in Bishop Robert's charter from 1152 or 1153 (*St A. Lib.* 43) as having belonged to St Serf's (see Barrow 1992, 119 and fn, 80), the St Serf's property records are clear evidence of document production (for more on which, see Taylor this volume). Other, less clear, evidence for an active scriptorium at St Serf's is the suggestion that the copy of Adomnán's *Life of Columba*, commissioned by Alexander I (1107–24) was made there (Cowan and Easson 1976, 50) but this is far from certain and the scriptorium involved may be Durham (pers. comm. Simon Taylor; see also Veitch 2001, 155, fn. 115). However the nineteenth-century excavations produced no evidence to support this activity. It is worth noting that Annan (1860, 385) records the existence of a document said to have been dated 1530, being a Chancery Office receipt for parchment/velum made in the village of Kinneswood, approx. 2 miles from St Serf's. Vellum/parchment continued to be manufactured there down to the nineteenth century and, as Annan notes (*ibid.*, 388) probably in succession to monastic production. By the end of the medieval period the monastery may have had a number of its activities taking place off the island but near-by; at Kirkness (see Taylor, this volume), for example, the Priors had their main residence or manor-house, which by 1591 had passed to the Aytons of Kinaldie (*ESC* p. 231).

Before turning to assess the surviving material culture from St Serf's we should note that other artefacts and human remains have been recorded from the Priory but are now mostly lost. Annan (1860, 384–5) records the discovery of shards of painted glass, a quernstone, two keys (found in 1830 'when certain improvements' were being made on the Island) and 'a sword about 2 feet long—the blade inlaid with gold, the handle having a cross guard 'found betwixt St Serf's Island and the shore of Portmoak.' Given the crossguard and the findspot—the main route to and from the Island—this may have been a genuine medieval sword. Human remains have also been found—several were uncovered

in the vicinity of the ruin of the church including a skull (donated to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, National Museum of Scotland accession number X.ET. 39) and a profusion of other bones (*ibid.*, 384). During and just prior to the visit in 1877 two skeletons in particular were excavated and reburied; apparently they did not have coffins and could not be identified as the remains of St Ronan, prior of St Serf's and Bishop Grahame of St Andrews (Kerr 1882, 160).

Antiquarian investigations

The finds from the 1877 excavations, along with one or two stray finds, were accumulated by David Marshall, Kinross businessman and antiquarian. Marshall joined the Society of Antiquaries in 1872 and co-led their 1877-exploration of St Serf's Island. Initially the finds recovered were sent to Edinburgh. The only surviving archival information is a letter (PMAG accession number 1025.33) dated 1881 from David Marshall to Joseph Anderson, informing him that the finds would arrive imminently at the Royal Institute, Edinburgh. None of the finds are mentioned in detail: the 'millstone' is mentioned only for being too big for the box and so not sent, and a modern key is mentioned as being 'curious'. Dr Anderson was clearly not impressed with the assemblage, placing them back in Marshall's keeping as 'insufficiently representing the ancient state of the island' (Marshall 1901). Marshall died on 1 January 1902 and bequeathed his, by then, much expanded collection to the people of Kinross. From 1903 much of the collection was displayed in various manifestations of the Marshall Museum, Kinross, until its closure in 1996. The collection as it then stood was relocated back to its parent body, Perth Museum & Art Gallery.¹

Circa 1901 David Marshall compiled a catalogue of his collection, which survives as a hand-written document now in the archives of Perth Museum. It is called *A Catalogue Of Objects of Antiquity And Natural Science In My Possession Being The Nucleus Of A Prospective Museum For Kinross*,

¹ The Marshall Museum was established in the caretaker's flat in the Kinross Council Carnegie Free Library, which opened in 1903. This closed in 1960. Following local government reorganisation in 1974 the newly formed Perth & Kinross District Council opened the refurbished Museum in 1975, encouraged by the Kinross-shire Antiquarian Society, founded in 1960 to secure the reopening of the Museum. Stringent cuts to local government finances forced the further reorganised local authority—now Perth & Kinross Council—to close the Museum in 1996.

Reserving All Family Relics And All My Books And Manuscripts Except Such As Are Included In This Catalogue. The entries for St Serf's comprise:

'10. *Box of Fragments of Ancient Pottery*—a roofing slate with nails—eight slate nails: old pipe head: silver l. button: two iron knives: fragments of a large glass bottle: fragments of window glass: an amber bead found at St Serf's and returned to me by Dr Anderson, Keeper of the Museum of Antiquaries of Scotland, as insufficiently representing the ancient state of the island. These remains were found when the site of the Priory was explored by the society of Antiquaries in 1877.' The pipe head referred to is presumably a clay tobacco pipe and not a piece of outdoor plumbing—his catalogue later refers to three antique pipe heads, two of which came from his garden. Subsequently Marshall inserted an end-note to the entry: 'Upper stone of a "man-mill" (red sandstone) found on St Serf's at the same time as the other fragments and left in my hands.

38. *Slates from the roof of Lochleven Castle: St Serf's Priory: Dowhill Castle and Fossoway Old Church.*

64. *Cast (by Mr Henry Laing of Edinburgh) of the Seal of the abbot of St Serf's in Lochleven* from a document among the Panmure Charters dated 1237. Presented by the late Dr E. Anderson of Astral Villas, Muckhart.' (This cast is now in the Perth collection as K1972.397).

65. *Three Agates and one Jasper stone* from St Serf's Inch in Lochleven, polished and presented by John Hill Barton, LLD, the Historiographer Royal of Scotland.

66. *Oyster shell and two copper coins from St Serf's.*

Additional documentation in the Museum allows us to track some of the additions and losses to the collection from St Serf's. In 1985, the Kinross-shire Antiquarian Society issued a catalogue (Buchanan 1985) of the Marshall Museum which included, for St Serf's Island, two perforated stones, a copper button, four keys, a spearhead, building stones, a nail, a knife handle, pottery sherds, glass-bottle shards and plate glass shards (for full details see the archive in PMAG). An undated typewritten list of *Pottery Objects in the Museum* includes the addition of 1972.532, comprising handle, base, rim and body sherds, all from various jugs and cooking pots dating broadly between 1300–1800 AD.

Catalogue of Finds

The surviving fragments of medieval material culture from St Serf's and in the collections of Perth Museum and Art Gallery are here catalogued broadly according to probable social function (the post-medieval and later objects have also been catalogued for the archive in PMAG).

Building Construction and Fabric

1. Iron nail. Accession number: K1972.405. Marshall catalogue number: 10.
L: 52 mm (shank: 45 mm), max. head diam: 27 mm.
Short-shanked nail with slightly domed, very broad head. The shank is rectangular and the head approximately circular. There is some corrosion but the nail is basically sound. There are traces off what may be mortar adhering to it. Its form—both its domed broad head and its shank to head ratio—are typical, for example, of nails used as door studs. Comparable nails are known quite widely, including from Aberdeen (Murray 1983, 188, cat. 78, 79) and Perth (Holdsworth 1987, 139, type B) of thirteenth-fourteenth century date, and from Niddry Castle (Proudfoot & Aliaga-Kelly 1998, Illus. 24, cat 2446).
2. Window glass. Accession number: K1972.400. Marshall catalogue number: 10
L: 25 mm, W: 23 mm, Th: 2 mm.
A single shard of pale green glass with a slightly pitted surface and partially encrusted with a black deposit of devitrification. Date: probably fifteenth-sixteenth century.
3. Window glass. Accession number: K1972.400. Marshall catalogue number: 10
Three small shards of window glass with extensive devitrification giving a rainbow of colours. Date: probably fifteenth-sixteenth century.
4. Roof slates. Accession number: K1972.327. Marshall catalogue number: 38.
 - (1) L: 157 mm, W: 170 mm, Th: 21 mm
 - (2) L: 145 mm, W: 104 mm, Th: 7 mm
 - (3) L: 181 mm, W: 95 mm, Th: 9 mm
 - (4) L: 240 mm, W: 139 mm, Th: 9 mm
 - (5) L: 212 mm, W: 131 mm, Th: 9 mm

Five roofing slates, four composed of Dalridian slate and one composed of sandstone (number 1). Numbers 1 and 2 are pierced with comparatively large nail holes. All five slates were collected by David Marshall from St Serf's Priory, Lochleven Castle, Dowhill Castle and Fossoway Old Church but he kept no precise details as to which slate came from which site. At least one, possibly two come from St Serf's. The sandstone slate (1) is a grey sandstone, possibly a Fife carboniferous siltstone. It is of poor quality and likely to have had a local origin to wherever it was used. There are several comparable slates in the Perth collection, also from Fossoway Kirk and so it seems reasonable to assume that (1) also comes from Fossoway. Accepting this, we can reasonably state that the roofing material used at some time at St Serf's was slate. The nearest quarry sources of Dalridian slate are/were Dunkeld/Birnam (Armstrong *et al.* 1985, 94) and Aberfoyle (Whittow 1979, 190–1). Two of the slates (3 and 5) each bear a single, clear marking-out line, running the full surviving width of the slate. Each line is lightly incised and clearly cut with the aid of a ruler.

5. Fragment of iron strapwork (?). Accession number: K1972.407.
L: 33 mm, W: 21 mm.

Originally classified as a piece of building stone and found in 1871, this is a small piece of corroded iron. On one side there is a corroded swelling indicative of a rivet and on the other side a trace of wood is mineralised in the corrosion products, which helps to confirm the suggestion that it is likely to be a fragment of decorative strapwork for a wooden door.

Daily Life

Security

6. Key. Accession number: K1972.86 (previous number 164).
L: 120 mm, W (max.): 50 mm

Iron socket key. A rectangular socketed head projects from a sinuous tapering handle that terminates as a curled tail. For use on a central bolt locking mechanism on a large door. It is recorded as having been dug up on St Serf's but with no precise location or date. Date: probably sixteenth–eighteenth century (?).

7. Key. Accession number: K1972.392 (previous number 202).
L: 153 mm.

Iron rotary key with openwork kidney-shaped bow. Rolled, hollow shank with an integral bit with four clefts, one with an elaborate opening. Corroded. Presumably for a door lock. Probably sixteenth century. Recorded simply as having been found on St Serf's Island.

Kitchen and Table

8. Stone vessel fragment. Accession number: K1972.408.

L: 61 mm, W (max.): 26 mm

Sandstone fragment, probably from a mortar or possibly a holy water stoup or piscina. It is a rim fragment that tapers due to breakage. It has a broad bevelled upper surface bearing fine striations due to working and/or low-level polishing. The presence of a stone 'font' (actually a wall stoup) is noted in the ruins and said to be largely destroyed (Annan 1860, 384). The remains of it are still visible today in the south wall of the church, to the right of the door. The fragment was previously noted as being a piece of building stonework, found in 1871. There were clearly a range of stone vessels for ecclesiastical and other usage and this fragment might also be compared with the fragment of a stone basin from the Carmelite friary at Linlithgow (Stones (ed.) 1989, 148 and ill. 90, number 181) and, in particular the fragment of a stone bowl (with a single surviving trefoil of decoration) from the Carmelite friary of Perth (*ibid.*, 160 and ill. 104 number 393).

9. Glass vessel. Accession number: K1972.400. Marshall catalogue number: 10.

L: 14 mm, W: 16 mm, Th: 4 mm; internal diameter of hollow rim: 3 mm

A small shard of pale green vessel glass. Previously classified as window glass, it is identified here as the fragment of a foot-ring with a hollow rim from the pedestal base of a goblet or beaker. A possible sinuous curve—an element of mould-blown decoration—highly worn, is just discernible on the upper surface. Date: fourteenth–sixteenth century.

10. Ceramics. Accession number: K1972.404 and K1972.532, A = AA. K1972.404 is a single sherd of White Gritty Ware cooking pot of twelfth–fifteenth-century date, found in 1881 on the Island. K1972.532 comprises 27 sherds, labelled A to AA and found during the 1877 excavations. There are ten sherds of East Coast Redware (thirteenth–fifteenth century); one rod handle sherd of Later

Reduced Greyware (fifteenth–eighteenth century); nine sherds of White Gritty Ware cooking pot, (twelfth–fifteenth century, including a frilled bi-fid or pie-crust rim type—a thirteenth century Fife rim type) and seven sherds of White Gritty Ware jugs. Apart from the rod handle, which could be post-medieval in date, the assemblage is firmly medieval. The absence of any imports, such as Yorkshire wares and Rhenish wares, implies the material is twelfth–thirteenth century rather than later (D. Hall, pers. comm.). As St Serf's was some distance from any port in the medieval period the assemblage, such as it is, may be demonstrating a typical, non-cosmopolitan range of pottery (D. Hall, pers. comm.).

Personalia

11. Knife. Accession number: K1972.409. Marshall catalogue number: 10. L: 59 mm (overall), 33 mm (tang); W: 24 mm (blade), 7 mm (tang).

Iron knife, the blade and tang of which are both broken and corroded. It is of whittle-tang form, i.e. the tang is tapered for insertion into a handle. Insufficient of the blade survives to classify it beyond a broad blade, probably with a single cutting edge. Compare the fifteenth century example from the Austin Friary, Leicester (Mellor & Pearce 1981, 139, cat. 68) and also the C category variants (mostly eleventh–fifteenth century) from York (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2752–2754). The broad bladed knife from the Linlithgow Carmelite friary (Stones (ed.) 1989, 162 and ill. 104 number 247) with its Gothic hybrid creature(s) on the wooden handle reminds us how elaborately decorated some monastic knives could be: in part this was due to their need to cater for high status guests, in part due to their own involvement in the cultural life of their times.

Diet

12. Oyster shell. Accession number: K1972.399. Marshall catalogue number: 66.

L: 85 mm, W: 70 mm. Species: *Ostrea edulis* (upper valve).

This was recorded as found on the Island in 1871. The outer, organic layer of the oyster shell has been eroded away. The inner surface bears minute, possible traces of the organisms that lived off the dead remains of the oyster. The presence of this shell on St Serf's Island is indicative of seafood being brought to the Priory as

part of the diet of the monks and their guests. Fish was of course essential to the dietary observance of fasting, particularly during Lent. No evidence has been found on the shell indicating its reuse as a palette for mixing colours in the scriptorium. The use of such shells, broken-up as a constituent of building mortar, is a possibility but there is no evidence to suggest this in terms of further shells (broken or otherwise) or deposits of mortar.

13. Quernstone. Accession number: K1972.341. Marshall catalogue number: 10.

D: 440 mm (whole), 160 mm (hole); Th: 55 mm.

Rotary quernstone upper, composed of Old Red Sandstone. It is damaged along two opposing edges. One of the damaged areas has removed the peg-handle socket. There is a small hole, c. 10 mm in diameter, visible in section through the broken profile. There is at least one other millstone from St Serf's—set in the blocking of the eastern arch of the church ruin and recorded by Cameron (in preparation). The one catalogued here is presumably that first noted by Annan (1862, 385). Plausibly medieval though later use by shepherds on the Island cannot be ruled out.

Textile Production

19. Spindle whorl. Accession number: K1972.300 (previous number: 164)

D: 25 mm (whole), 9 mm (hole); Th: 7 mm.

Composed of mudstone or volcanic ash and pale grey-green in colour. One face is rougher in texture due to surface shearing and erosion/wear. The hole is a straight-sided circular perforation and vestiges of line decoration can be seen on the broken surface. An irregular groove is incised around the circumference, presumably for decoration. Date: probably fourteenth-sixteenth century.

20. Loom/net weight. Accession number: k1972.300 (previous number 164).

D: 59 mm (whole), 6mm (hole); Th: 8 mm

Composed of Old Red Sandstone and roughly oval in shape, it is crudely finished and has an hour-glass perforation for suspension. Date: fourteenth-sixteenth century.

Weaponry

21. Arrowhead (see Illus. 41). Accession number: K1972.149
L: 94 mm; W: 13 mm

Iron arrowhead with a narrow rectangular tang which swells into a rounded collar from which a narrow leaf-like blade projects. The blade is thin and flat until thickening to a symmetrical four-sided point. The tip is very slightly bent or folded over, presumably a consequence of impact. It was originally catalogued as an ornamental spearhead and was found by Mr G. G. McWhanell (a boatman) on the Island in 1922. Whilst an arrowhead from a monastic context should occasion no surprise—there is a thirteenth century example from St Austin's Friary, Leicester (Mellor & Pearce 1981, 137, cat. 59)—the unusual form of this example suggested an ethnographic origin. However consultation with colleagues, particularly David Starley (Royal Armouries) and Andy Halpin (National Museum of Ireland) suggested that the form (especially the tang) is indicative of an early medieval date. Andy Halpin commented that all its features, except for the unusual thickened point, are diagnostically Scandinavian, probably of the tenth-eleventh century. Its use as a hunting weapon (wild fowling is suggested by the environment of the findspot, which was underwater during the medieval period) may be discounted as it is unlikely to have made a large enough wound to induce rapid bleeding and so a quick death enabling recovery (pers. comm. John Waller). The arrowhead comes within the tanged form, most typical pre-1066 AD and probably of Scandinavian origin (Jessup 1996, 194–5 and 1997, 2). Jessup also considers them suitable for both hunting and warfare. Perhaps the closest parallels come from the assemblage of Anglo-Scandinavian arrowheads from York: two in particular (Ottaway 1992, fig 329 numbers 3912 and 3925) though having shorter tangs and less pronounced points feel like less evolved forms. There is also at least one York arrowhead (*ibid.*, 3913) with a rounded shaft/collar.

Miscellaneous

22. Gemstones. Accession number: K1972.508. Marshall catalogue number: 65.

Agates: (i) 38 by 27 mm

(ii) 33 by 22 mm

(iii) 34 by 26 mm

Jasper: 38 by 32 mm

Found on St Serf's Island during the 1877 excavations, these gemstones do not occur naturally in the Old Red Sandstone subsoil of the Kinross area. They do occur in the hills to the north and

west of Loch Leven. Given that the Island is a hummock of fluvio-glacial deposits this could be the route by which they reached the island (though a bigger deposit might be expected if this were the case). Polishing agates is a laborious process and this may explain why only one face on each has been polished. The phrasing of Marshall's catalogue entry (see above) suggests that they were found in their natural, unpolished condition which in turn suggests that they were unlikely to be amongst the raw materials of the Priory's scriptorium, though this and possible amuletic use remain distant possibilities.

Discussion

One or perhaps two of the slates testify to the nature of at least one of the Priory complex roofs with its raw material travelling from either Dunkeld or Aberfoyle. A single broad-headed nail/stud is further constructional evidence compatible with the fourteenth-to-sixteenth century. The latter, along with the fragment of possible iron strapwork and the two keys (cat. 6 and 7) evokes the image of substantial timber doors. Small shards of glass point to simple, plain windows. Moving within the complex of buildings what little evidence there is largely reflects activities within the domestic range and interaction with the outside world. The shard of a glass drinking-vessel—presumed to be a pedestal-based beaker or goblet—is compatible with a fourteenth-to-sixteenth century date. More complete, comparable examples are known from several English monastic sites and such glass tableware is taken as an indicator of significant status (Tyson 2000, 20–1). The spindle-whorl, the loom/net weight and the upper quernstone are all compatible with medieval activities in relation to textile and food production. However without more specific provenance they are not diagnostic enough to rule out a post-medieval date, though the history of the site suggests that these activities are unlikely to have persisted once the Priory was dissolved. The most substantial piece of medieval evidence from excavations in the vicinity of St Serf's is the ceramic assemblage. It qualifies as what we might term a standard domestic assemblage—that is it comprises mainly jugs and cooking pots, which would encompass use in the Priory's domestic areas and their catering for pilgrims. It is a comparatively small-scale sample but its value can be usefully extended by consideration alongside the extensive quantity of pottery recovered from

Portmoak in the mid 1970s, in advance of a glider runaway extension. Over 1,000 sherds of pottery were recovered (Munro 1976, 38) and these were kindly lent to the Museum to facilitate a fresh examination by Derek Hall (SUAT Ltd). The assemblage includes no Yorkshire wares though it does include five sherds and a handle fragment of imported or proto-stoneware jugs of the fourteenth–fifteenth century, suggesting that imported wares were reaching centres away from the main ports (unless of course these examples arrived not by trade but with the retinue of a high status visitor). The assemblage also includes small amounts of fifteenth–sixteenth century redwares but is largely dominated by typical Fife White Gritty Ware, with significantly more jugs than cooking pots and at least one very large storage jar. It also includes a pedestal-base sherd, unusually in local fabric, and a possible piece of kiln furniture. Perhaps the most significant single sherd however is from a finely made White Gritty Ware copy of a German stoneware jug but without the frilling to the base one might expect. It is both suggestive of an accomplished local industry and of the sorts of good quality tableware available to the Priory complex. On the whole the assemblage probably represents midden dumping from a combination of St Serf's and the hospitals at Portmoak and Scotlandwell (see below).

Of the surviving objects, easily the most exciting is the arrowhead, which until now has been overlooked. It is identified here, thanks primarily to the observations of Andy Halpin, as tenth–eleventh century Scandinavian. A tenth-century date for this arrowhead places it in the context of the developing kingdom of Alba, which in the first half of the tenth century was dominated by the kingship of Constantine II. He astutely played off the Hiberno-Norse power-base of Dublin and the Danish one of York, often in alliance against the growing power of Wessex. This was a turbulent relationship that included a Viking raid on Dunkeld in 903 and a major battle in Fortriu in 904 (Smyth 1984, 189–214; Crawford 1987, 58–62 and note also Woolf 2006, which relocates Fortriu to the Moray region). Constantine gave his daughter in marriage to Olaf Guthfrithsson and there followed two generations of close cultural and dynastic links between Scots and Scandinavians at the highest levels (Taylor 1995, 145). The find-spot of the arrowhead is just to the north of the Clyde-Forth corridor used by Scandinavian armies between Dublin and York and also no doubt by Scandinavian traders (and the catalogue entry above notes the similarity of some of the York arrowheads to this example). There are, though, few finds of Viking artefacts from this period in this mid-eastern part of Scotland. We can

see something of Scandinavian appropriation of Scottish and Pictish material culture through such objects as the Hunterston brooch and the (now lost) Monifeith Law plaque, each inscribed by Scandinavian runes in the tenth–eleventh century (Crawford 1987, 132). Crawford (*ibid.*) suggests that the Monifeith plaque is evidence of Viking movement along the coastal waters of southeast Scotland.

Apart from a problematical silver arm-ring that has become entangled with the Norrie's Law hoard but is probably a separate find from the Largo area (Graham-Campbell 1992 and Graham-Campbell & Batey 1998, 103 for an inference from it that Largo Bay would have been a safe haven for the Viking fleet using the Forth), the only other find of Hiberno-Norse portable material culture from the Tayside-Fife region, an early eleventh-century coin hoard, also comes from an early monastic site, Dull, Strath Tay, Perthshire. It is the only certain hoard of Hiberno-Norse pennies from Scotland. It has been taken to point to monastic activity with possible Irish associations rather than a vestige of the political machinations of King Cnut (Bateson 1993, 214, who also notes a possible hoard provenanced as 'Fife 1832' which may have been found at Parkhill (Lindores); see also Graham-Campbell 1994, 24, 53, 152). The coins may then be indicators of trading activity but they may also fit into a wider settlement pattern which Simon Taylor has done much to elucidate. A key strand of this is the less portable material culture of Scandinavian hog-backed and related tombstones. In the mid-east Scotland region in question there are tenth–eleventh-century hogbacks known from Inchcolm and Tulliallan, Fife; Meikle, Perthshire; Logie (two examples), Stirlingshire, along with related recumbent monuments from Brechin and St Vigean, Angus; Meikle, Perthshire and St Andrews, Fife. From the eleventh–twelfth century there are related, tegulated coped monuments from Dunkeld, Perthshire, Tillicoultry, Clackmannanshire and Tulliebole, Kinross-shire (Ritchie 2003, 17–19). Ritchie's analysis (*ibid.*, 15) links the spread of hog-backs to trading activities along maritime and riverine routes, with the main cultural link being to Scandinavian northern England in terms of stylistic origins (they develop along their own distinctive lines in Scotland). It is the cultural and temporal conjunction of the hog-backs with some limited place-name evidence (including a cluster of *-bý(r)* names in south-east Fife: the now obsolete Weathersbie, Auchterderran, and Gedbys, by Kirkcaldy (indicating sheep and goat farming respectively), along with the still extant Humbie, Aberdour (indicating dog keeping)) which led Taylor (2004) to suggest that the most likely period of Scandinavian

settlement in Fife, Angus and Lothian was the tenth century. A very significant, if difficult, piece of this evidence relates to St Serf's. Dating from the mid eleventh century, it is the account of King Macbeth's and Queen Gruoch's donation of lands at Kirkness to St Serf's (*St A. Lib.* 114); it is fully discussed by Taylor, this volume. If the ownership of these various lands, and no doubt others, was given in return for Scandinavian mercenary services as suggested by Taylor (2004) then the finding of the arrowhead at St Serf's may be a very eloquent piece of complementary evidence. The arrowhead is most likely of military purpose and perfectly compatible with Scandinavians settling in the area. We should of course note that such arrowheads need not always be symptomatic of the presence of Scandinavians, and trade, loot and gift-exchange must be allowed for.

Of the missing items referred to the so-called amber bead is the one with most later medieval interest. No full description survives but it could conceivably be of twelfth–thirteenth-century date and comparable to the yellow glass beads excavated in St Anne's Lane, Perth in 1974 (Thoms 1982, 449). These were recovered from thirteenth–fourteenth-century midden deposits but were little commented upon at the time. The site was occupied in the medieval period by the chapel of St Anne, who, as the mother of the Virgin Mary, attracted a lot of cult interest. Although the 1974 excavations revealed no structural evidence of the chapel, the beads are most likely to be prayer or rosary beads. These are well known from other sites including York (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2948), Winchester (Biddle & Cressey 1990, 659–65) London (Egan & Pritchard 1991, 305–17) and Norwich (Margeson 1993, 5). Medieval wills record that the numbers of beads in a set could vary from as few as ten to around 150 (Biddle & Cressey 1990, 660). The beads from St Anne's Lane number 145 small round beads and 13 slightly larger, flattened beads, consistent with the pattern seen elsewhere. The wills also testify that rosaries were bequeathed to hang around the necks of statues of the Virgin and other saints, a practice attested as early as the eleventh century (e.g. by Lady Godiva in Coventry, *ibid.* fn. 4, 6). The St Anne's Lane beads would fit such a context of use, as would the single bead recovered from St Serf's (which could also be compared with the single jet rosary bead and two bone beads found by excavation at Elcho Nunnery near Perth, Reid & Lye 1988, 75, 80), and certainly fits the detailed local pattern of Marian devotion in medieval Perth (Hall forthcoming 2007). Beads were also used in decorative embroidery on clothing throughout the later medieval period but were rarely worn as

necklaces: prior to the Reformation such beads were made mostly to supply the demand for rosaries (Biddle & Cressey 1990, 660; Margeson 1993, 5). Associations of rosary beads with ecclesiastical sites should of course occasion no surprise but it is worth noting that the beads from York are associated with thirteenth/fourteenth-century activity at the College of Vicars Choral, Bedern and the church, later Gilbertine Priory, of St Andrew, Fishergate, while the beads from Elcho Nunnery have already been mentioned.

Such prayer beads were undoubtedly popular with pilgrims (the example from Elcho came from Santiago de Compostella, Spain) and the St Serf's example can be seen as further evidence of local pilgrimage traffic. St Serf's was presumably a pilgrimage destination along with its mainland site at Portmoak and the near-by hospital and holy well at Scotlandwell. Medieval documents indicate that St Serf's and Portmoak were virtually interchangeable designations and Cowan and Easson suggest (1976, 93) that by the fifteenth century Portmoak may have been the main focus of the site. The association between St Serf's and Portmoak remains opaque but the name Portmoak occurs in its earliest surviving form as *Portemuoeche* (1152 × 1159). The name combines Gaelic *port*, 'harbour' and the saint's name Moanus, so giving 'harbour of Moanus' (Taylor, this volume). The name indicates its function as the harbour and ferry point for St Serf's Island and a cult of Moanus, like Serf, a possibly Pictish saint. Earlier than the place-name evidence is a fragment of sculpture (see Illus. 42) recovered from the ruinous site of the medieval church at Portmoak during restoration of the site (Munro 1976, 38). The slab measures 401 mm (W) by 702 mm (L), with a maximum thickness of 185 mm. The slab is filled with a Latin cross with round hollow angles, carved in relief and with a bead-moulded border. The shaft has been fore-shortened by the breaking of the slab, as have the side arms of the cross. The upper arm of the cross is 10.5 cm wide, fractionally wider than the side arms and shaft at 104 mm. The cross is infilled with interlace, 5 cords on the shaft and 4 cords on the arms and head. The extra cord on the shaft appears to feed into what was possibly a central boss (now very worn and c. 4 mm in diameter) or perhaps more likely a circular motif defining further interlace. Recent analysis of classically-rooted medieval interlace has shown that it was an apotropaic device, doubly so when combined with the cross. Interlace seems to have been particularly important as an evil-averting in threshold or liminal locations: as the cross was seen as a doorway, the protection of that doorway by interlace was regarded as

necessary (Trilling 1995, 73–6).² If the Portmoak cross-slab functioned as a gravemarker this suggests a further threshold dimension (between life and death, heaven and earth) requiring apotropaic protection.

Raking light makes clear that there are vestigial traces of figural sculpture in the upper right and left quadrants of the slab. The left figure is very difficult to determine because highly worn, the figure on the right is less worn and appears to be an angel. Discernible are a pair of legs, part of a torso and a pair of extended wings. This places the Portmoak cross-slab in the company of several other angel-bearing monuments, mainly cross-slabs, including Aberlemno roadside, Brechin, Kirriemuir, Eassie, Rossie Priory, St Vigean's 1 and 2, Dunfallandy, Lethendy and Kincardine (Henderson & Henderson 2004, figs. 218–19, 215, 183, 179, 76, 220, 105, 49 respectively; for other examples see *ECMS* figs, 263b, 233a, 66, and 404 and Fisher 2001, 131–4, 138, 145–6). The subject of angelic depictions on sculpture is fully explored in Henderson & Henderson (2004, 148–52): they are variously clothed in ankle- or knee-length garments, or with naked legs. They are sometimes contrasted with non-angelic figures and frequently seem to be invoked in their active roles as messengers and guardians. They are a vital element of the iconographic programme deployed for Pictish sculpture and in some respects echo the rich use of angels illuminated in the *Book of Kells* (pers. comm. Isabel Henderson). On Portmoak there is clearly one angel possibly contrasted with a figure (human or zooanthropomorphic) or animal, or possibly with a second angel.

Munro (*op. cit.*) notes that the shape of the cross on the Portmoak slab and the continuous interlacing covering it can be matched in tenth- and eleventh-century examples from St Andrews Cathedral, although the elements are not combined in exactly the same way. Recent re-examination suggests that a ninth-century date is not out of the question (I. Fisher, pers. comm.), which may be a clue to Portmoak and St Serf's being a dual site foundation from the beginning. The sculptural links with St Andrews are not unique, but in this context they may support other evidence for links between the Loch Leven community and St Andrews as early as the mid tenth century (see *St A. Lib.* 113).³

² Kitzinger (1993, 3–6) is sceptical of how widespread apotropaic interlace was but certainly accepts it in the context of doorways and thresholds.

³ Pre-tenth century church links are likely to have been dominated by the mother church at Culross, a church with an important group of hitherto under-appreciated early medieval sculptures which will be the focus of a separate paper currently in preparation.

Portmoak was also the site of a hospital, dedicated to St Thomas, and in existence by 1184 (Cowan & Easson 1976, 188–9). The date of the reference to this hospital, 1179 × 1184 (*St. A. Lib.* 176) makes it a very early dedication to St Thomas, though a date of 1179 accords well with the 1178 date for the foundation of Arbroath Abbey, dedicated to St Thomas Becket by King William the Lion. A hospital dedicated to St Mary was founded at near-by Scotlandwell by Bishop Malvoisin of St Andrews (1202–38). In 1214 the church at Moonzie was granted to the hospital by Malvoisin to support their care for the poor and pilgrims. The hospital was granted to the Trinitarian Order in 1244 (*ibid.*, 185). The most recent review of the evidence for the hospitals (Hall 2003, 90–92) accepts them as two institutions but Simon Taylor has suggested (pers. comm.) that there may have been only one hospital in the Scotlandwell/Portmoak area given that St Thomas's and St Mary's are never mentioned together. Intriguingly both are associated with bridges, one the bridge of 'Porthmooch' (*St. A. Lib.* 146) and the other the bridge of 'Lochlevyn' (*St. A. Lib.* 176). The jury is perhaps out until we get more evidence to show if they were ever linked or if one superseded the other. Certainly Scotlandwell has the longer documented history and better known pilgrimage focus. The ancient healing well at Scotlandwell was a popular destination and its visitors included Robert I (Yeoman 1999, 58). A further indicator of pilgrimage activity in the vicinity survives in the shape of a broken sandstone mould for casting pilgrim badges and found in Kinross (*ibid.*, Illus. 39e). On both sides it carries a design for two different crucifix badges coupled with a circular badge on one side and a small rectangular badge that appears to be for a head-reliquary (see Illus. 43). The findspot (at the opposite end of Loch Leven) of this mould may seem locally remote from St Serf's and Portmoak, but it is within easy reach of a number of pilgrimage routes crossing Fife to reach the principal pilgrimage destination of St Andrews (see map in Yeoman 1999, 57, illus. 35 and expanded version in Hall 2007). The two crucifix badges evident on the mould confirm the popularity of rood pilgrimages (Hall *ibid.*) and suggest that there may have been several in the area, possibly including St Serf's/Portmoak. The head-reliquary seems to confirm the local context for there are two strong local candidates for such a shrine: the head of St Fergus at Scone Abbey (Hall 2006, 85–6) and the shrine of St and Queen Margaret at Dunfermline Abbey (Yeoman 1999, 71–4). The souvenirs that were cast from the Kinross mould, and no doubt

others, would certainly have been available to pilgrims visiting the St Serf's cluster of sites in the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries.

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MANURING PRACTICES IN SCOTLAND: DEEP ANTHROPOGENIC SOILS AND THE HISTORICAL RECORD

Jo McKenzie

Several decades of geoarchaeological research has shown that anthropogenic soils—those created and/or altered by human activity—retain in their physical and chemical makeup a wealth of cultural information valuable to archaeologist and historian alike. Micromorphological features, lipid biomarker traces and soil nutrients such as phosphorus all provide significant indicators for aspects of past land management, animal husbandry and arable cultivation.

Although such studies have generally been presented in the scientific archaeological literature, the growing perception of the historic past as preserved within a *landscape*, rather than individual archaeological sites or historical remains, has seen research into anthropogenic soils assume increasing prominence in interdisciplinary archaeological projects. In Scotland, these have ranged from multi-period pre- and proto-historic excavations (e.g. Dockrill and Simpson 1994; Simpson *et al.* 1998) to larger-scale characterisation of medieval and later rural settlement (MoLRS) landscapes (e.g. Chrystall 1998; Entwistle *et al.* 2000; Turner 2003). All illustrate the potential of anthropogenic soil studies to complement a range of archaeological data sources, such as structural remains and surviving field systems, to become a valuable tool for historical geographical study.

More challenging has been the concept of relating more explicitly historical data, such as documentary sources, to the soil record. But although these may provide only indirect evidence for past soil modification, they can prove an equally coherent basis for enquiry. This paper discusses a project which used historical sources to investigate the distribution throughout Scotland and the Isles of a specific human-modified soil: the deep anthropogenic topsoil.

Deep anthropogenic topsoils are those which have been augmented by long-term, intensive manuring: to a minimum of 50 cm, although examples of over a metre have been recorded. Generically termed ‘*plaggen soils*’, these deep, dark soils are significant cultural features seen throughout Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and especially

the Netherlands, from which the most extensive body of plaggen soil research comes (e.g. Pape 1970; Groenman van Waateringe and Robinson 1988; Spek 1992). The term is derived from the German '*plagge*'—'sod', and refers to a technique in which turf sods were pared from areas of waste land and either used as bedding in stock pens and stables until they became impregnated with dung, or composted with dung separately before the resulting bulky mix of mineral and organic material was applied as fertiliser to the fields.

Although there are some examples of prehistoric plaggen-type soils (Conry 1974, 322), the plaggen manuring system can be seen chiefly as a response to the challenges facing farmers in these regions through the key period of agricultural development and intensification of the twelfth to thirteenth centuries (Mucher *et al.* 1990; Spek 1992). Plaggen soils are found almost exclusively upon chemically poor, loose sandy soils, commonly associated with extensive wasteland areas of scrub and heath (Gormsen 1991, 105). The use of the latter in bulk manures transformed these sands into infield areas of fertile, moist, physically stable soils, essential to agricultural developments of the period such as the introduction of rye cultivation and permanent cropping. Likewise, the plaggen system assisted in the reclamation of moorland for cultivation (Poulsen 1997, 140).

The degree to which the plaggen system permeated aspects of agricultural life and civic organisation make for interesting study, and are frequently illustrated in the historical record. In the Netherlands, heath and especially grassland areas that supplied plaggen turf were governed by regulations which attempted to balance manuring and grazing concerns, with complex rotations in place to promote heathland regeneration between turf cuttings (Pape 1970, 239). Specific tools are associated with the practice (Blume 1998, 1), and a variety of 'recipes' for plaggen manure, citing preferred treatments for different dung and turf sources, survive (Pape 1970, 241; Mucher *et al.* 1990, 57). Even place-names reference the plaggen system: in the Netherlands, while field and farm names in the low-lying *polders* are commonly associated with water management, on the higher, sandy plaggen areas such names are chiefly related to soil fertility (Siderius and de Bakker 2003, 529). The legacy of the plaggen system remains an evocative expression of the particular concerns of rural life and agricultural practice in these areas.

Aspects of the agricultural systems in which deep anthropogenic topsoils played such an important role are mirrored in pre-Improvement rural Scotland (Widgren 1997, 186), which ran a similarly mixed farming

regime supported by the basic infield-outfield template. This was also often in operation in marginal environments where maintaining arable production necessitated devoting a high manurial input into the often small areas suitable for infield. This was a labour-intensive system in which (especially) population pressures both demanded intensification, and at the same time provided the workforce necessary to maintain it through intensive manuring, plus the characteristic by-hand cultivation and soil modification methods (such as lazy-bed construction) familiar in marginal areas such as the Highlands and Islands (Dodgshon 1992, 178). Can we then expect plaggen-type topsoils to be a feature of at least these areas of the medieval and later rural settlement landscape in Scotland, and to provide a similarly valuable link to pre-Improvement rural life?

Although deep anthropogenic topsoils have been identified in Scotland, research in this area has generally been divorced from rural settlement studies as a whole. Evidence for Scottish deep topsoils is generally limited to the Northern Isles, and the association of these with multi-period excavations has resulted in a focus on largely pre-historic soil amendment related to individual sites (e.g. Simpson 1998; Simpson *et al.* 1998). While these studies have greatly added to our understanding of early agriculture in this region, the identification of deep anthropogenic topsoils of later date—notably the Norse-period soils from Marwick, Orkney (Simpson 1997) and the plaggen-type manuring system documented as surviving into the 1960s on the island of Papa Stour, Shetland (Davidson and Carter 1998)—suggest that manuring systems similar to those practised by their North European contemporaries may have been a feature of pre-Improvement Scotland on a wider scale. This project aimed to move beyond these known deep topsoil examples into a wider consideration of Scottish rural life beyond individual archaeological sites—to investigate not only the distribution of deep anthropogenic topsoils, but also what this may contribute to the still-developing picture of Highland and Lowland, mainland and island, tenant and landlord, in pre-Improvement Scotland. Documentary sources provide a clear starting point for such an approach, and one already tested in the plaggen soil areas with success (Stoklund 1999).

Scotland is fortunate in possessing two countrywide sets of comparatively early documentary sources which comment on agricultural practices: the County Agricultural Reports (1793–1814) and the First (or Old) Statistical Account of Scotland (1791–1799). The title of the first is self-explanatory; however, although agriculture is only one of many First Statistical Account topics, its resolution to parish level makes

this latter collection both the most detailed and finely-resolved source for past Scottish farming practice available. Therefore, this was used as the primary source for the project.

Undertaken to compile statistical information on the economic and social circumstances of Scotland, the First Statistical Account is the quintessential Improvement period work; however, in practice what both this and other contemporary works describe is *pre*-Improvement life in Scotland, albeit often with the generally critical tone and ‘vocabulary of deprecation’ of the moderniser (Gray 1983, xvi). Nevertheless, these richly informative accounts show that evidence for Scottish plaggen-type manuring systems surviving into the eighteenth century is to be found beyond the Northern Isles:

‘The principal manure used is the dung of housed cattle, mixed with straw, and sometimes with mud.’ (OSA Vol. 16, 153: Portree, Isle of Skye).

‘...in spring it was spread over with a compost of old divot, sod or turf, and dung...’ (OSA Vol. 20, 29: Boleskine and Abertarff, Inverness-shire).

‘...it is then manured with lime and dung, or a compost made up of these ingredients and a quantity of earth...upon the croft-land, that is, the land lying nearest the farm house, which has been enriched by all the manure, made there, being continually laid upon it...’ (OSA Vol. 2, 376: Dalserf, Lanarkshire).

The First Statistical Account, although clearly a potentially rich source for manuring practice, presented a logistical challenge: how to manipulate data of this kind into a spatial tool to investigate deep topsoil distribution whilst maintaining a critical treatment of what are, ultimately, a series of reports chiefly compiled by eighteenth-century parish clergy?

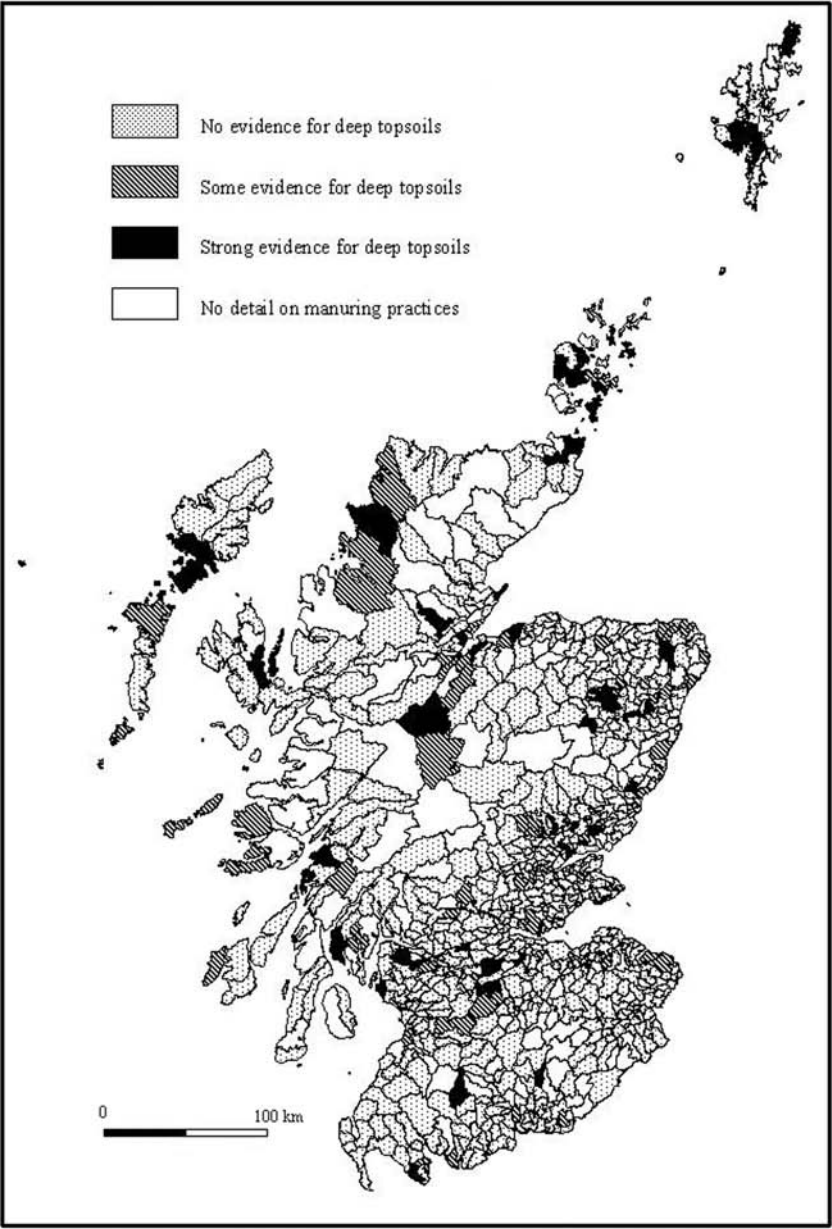
A database was created within which all references to manuring methods, materials and related data were collated by parish, and these details linked through ArcView GIS to a parish map of Scotland. This allowed the distribution of these records to be viewed as a graphic, and also converted them into a format compatible with other sources useful in assessing the distribution of soil types and landscape change, such as the Soil Survey of Scotland Soil Maps (e.g. Glentworth 1954) and archaeological survey databases such as the First Edition Survey Project (Historic Scotland/RCAHMS 2002) and the Historic Land Use Assessment (Bruce *et al.* 1999). A further critical assessment of the First Statistical Account data was then undertaken, with ambiguities and biases of reporting evaluated, and the many disparate references to cultivation practices which suggested the existence of plaggen-type

regimes interpreted. From this, a classification scheme was devised which rated each parish for its likelihood of having deep anthropogenic topsoils, information which was also entered into the ArcView database (McKenzie, forthcoming).

However, the picture which emerges from this database suggests that Scotland, despite similarities with cultivation practices in the plaggen soil regions, was not possessed of anything approaching a similar manuring system. Of these 876 parishes, 278 give no details on manuring practices and of the 598 that do, only 111 indicate a strong likelihood of deep topsoil development, with a further 114 indicating some likelihood. The second phase of this project, in which auger survey was undertaken around key habitation areas within some of these parishes and also in conjunction with evidence derived from the geographical and archaeological sources mentioned above, failed to identify deep anthropogenic topsoils in eight of the twelve areas surveyed (*ibid.*). The distribution of parishes according to the manuring classification is shown in Illus. 44, and it can be seen that there is no discernable geographical bias to this.

That this distribution partly reflects the particular concerns of the Statistical Account authors is not in doubt, and the large gaps in the database further underlines the difficulty of using historical data as a 'map' for seeing past landscapes. Yet paradoxically, what becomes clear through analysis of the First Statistical Account is that, alongside this *lack* of evidence for deep topsoil manuring systems, an alternative picture emerges with a regularity that raises some interesting theories as to why manuring systems in pre-Improvement Scotland actually may have acted to *discourage* deep anthropogenic topsoil formation. Unanticipated at the beginning of this project, these issues illustrate the significant potential of historical sources to interact with evidence from the soil record, and are the subject of this paper.

The vital ingredient separating a plaggen-type manuring system from those that do not augment the topsoil is the addition of mineral bulk-peat, turf or earth—to organic manures such as dung. A key part of the historical analysis was a search for references to the use of peat, turf and earth as manure additions. But what emerges instead is a point of contention. Whereas the construction of composts is encouraged, the cutting of turf for use in these—the backbone of the plaggen system—is universally discouraged as a '*miserable and destructive*' practice (Somerville 1796, 45) for the damage it did to pasture lands, as is the stripping of thinner turves for building and fuel:



Illus. 44 Distribution of parishes with the potential to develop deep topsoils, from the First Statistical Account.

'...the manure principally used...is feal, or the sward of the commons; the cutting of which is a practice disgraceful to the husbandry of the country, and attended with infinite loss to the proprietors. On some farms, occupiers have destroyed as much ground in this manner, as the surface of the fields they lay it on...The ground, when the surface is thus taken away, will yield no grass...' (Sinclair 1795, 202).

And, on a lighter note:

'The quantity of pasture grounds has been considerably reduced or destroyed...by the general practice of cutting feal and divot, or turf... This drew a pleasant sally from an English gentleman, some years ago. Observing a herd of meagre cattle here, gleaning a scanty subsistence on a naked spot, while every cottage was built of feal, and thatched with divot, he sarcastically remarked, that "though Sutherland was not destitute of stones or grass, "the people chose to build their houses of the latter, and leave their cattle to feed on the former!"' (OSA Vol. 8, 6–7: Dornoch, Sutherland).

Interestingly, this disapproval is also focused on the *addition* of turf and peat as a manuring strategy in itself, with the suggestion that 'moory' (or peaty) earth '*proves a poison to any soil on which it can be applied*' (Anderson 1794, 107), and that this is largely due to its *mineral* content: '*...mossy ground, which is very often of a very poor quality, and sometimes impregnated with mineral particle, and consequently injurious to vegetation; yet the common farmers will carry this beggarly, and sometimes noxious stuff, for miles...*' (Sinclair 1795, 130). Turf is similarly vetoed: '*feal...impregnated with mineral substances (is)...noxious to vegetation*' (*ibid.*, 202). Improvement writings urge caution in applying too much earth material to compost, as excessive weight compresses the dunghill, impeding the circulation of air and thus the fermentation process (Headrick 1796, 5; Somerville 1796, 12). By contrast, studies from the plaggen regions report that dunghill content was generally 5–6 times more turf and earth than animal dung (Stoklund 1999, 210).

The discouragement of turf cutting is also closely linked to the practice of 'paring and burning', as well as manuring. This involved the top growth of an area of grass or waste land—or even lazy-beds (OSA Vol. 15, 500)—being cut, burned, and the ashes spread over the burned area as a fertiliser (OSA Vol. 16, 120). The issue of paring and burning runs through the County Agricultural Reports of both Scotland and England, with authors divided as to whether the technique caused more harm than good (Woodward 1990, 261). Generally, there is agreement that while waste land '*where there is a rough and barren surface, over a fertile loam or clay*' (Sinclair 1814, 9) can be improved by paring and burning, '*supposed benefits...are too often counterbalanced by the evils which it occasions...a temporary stimulus...(through) those articles which*

are carried off during the process of combustion, an irreparable loss is sustained' (Somerville 1796, 82).

Such opinions voiced a prejudice that, by the time of these writings, already had legal backing. Government statutes against cutting turf both for paring and burning and manuring were established as early as 1685 (OSA Vol. 15, 456; Anderson 1794, 57) and were implemented country-wide. By the eighteenth century, paring and burning seems to have been only rarely used (Fenton 1970, 169) and Improvement period writers advocated cheaper marl and lime provision, '*so as to render the use of feal or turf perfectly unnecessary*' (Sinclair 1795, 218).

However, there were other, and legal, ways of channelling mineral bulk into the dunghill. Sources also suggest that an important manure source was the turf commonly used as building material (mainly roof thatch, but also wall construction) and for field dykes (Dodgshon 1994, 57). When *feal-dykes* were replaced, their bulk was deliberately ploughed into the fields (OSA Vol. 10, 180), as '*it was observed that the crop was always strongest on those parts of the field, on which the earth that had composted the fold dyke was spread*' (OSA Vol. 10, 486). Likewise,

'... (from) the swarded surface of the ground, cut into the form of large bricks, they make houses and offices for themselves, covering them with the same swarded turfs, cut thinner and resembling slates in their form. Once in three years, all the earthy part of these houses is thrown on the dunghill, and new houses built again of the same materials.' (OSA Vol. 8, 375; Creich, Sutherland).

There is evidence that turf utilised for these purposes was officially exempt from the restrictions governing turf cutting. The Coupar Angus Rental of 1464 reminds tenants of the Abbey lands that they were not permitted to '*upturn the meadows or pasture lands for their divots (turves), except only for repairing of houses*' (RCAHMS 1994, 117). (Note the early date of this local turf cutting restriction). It would seem that Scottish farmers were aware of the advantages of using and recycling these 'legal' materials: despite an abundance of stone for building, pre-Improvement farmers chose to build perishable, turf-based houses, possibly because these houses were designed partly with the needs of the dunghill in mind (Dodgshon 1993, 423). The relationship between these practices and the dearth of surviving rural settlement remains from especially the Medieval period in Scotland has recently been considered with reference to the use of soil chemical analysis as a means of identifying such settlements (Banks and Atkinson 2000, 70–72).

Despite these customs, even the most diligent recycling of building turf would not have resulted in enough mineral material going into

the midden to create deep topsoil: furthermore, Improvement period records show a growing prejudice against turf construction comparable to that against turf manuring. Turf-roofed houses '*ought to be prohibited*' and replaced with thatch or straw (Sinclair 1795, 264). Likewise, feal dykes are condemned as inefficient and liable to spread weeds (Ure 1794, 22) and farmers urged to replace them with stone (Johnston 1794, 48; Skene Keith 1814, 307).

Another means of turning turf into manure was through fuel waste. Although perceived as a second-class fuel source, used by those who could not afford peats or, increasingly, coals (e.g. OSA Vol. 17, 387; Vol. 3, 229; Vol. 4, 122), turf was widely used as fuel in pre-Improvement Scotland and, in areas where peat was scarce, was often the main fuel. But First Statistical Account sources suggest that turf was also burnt through choice, with even a parish as near to coal supplies as Lanark apparently still faithful to this '*absurd custom*' (OSA Vol. 18, 177). Manure provision is clearly recognised as one of the advantages of using turf in this way:

'The turf is procured by setting fire to the grass and heath... This practice greatly injures the moors by depriving them of their verdure... The loss, however, is in some measure repaid by the great quantity of ashes for manure, procured from this kind of fuel.' (OSA Vol. 16, 120—Killearn, Stirlingshire).

Here there may be parallels with aspects of the plaggen system: in Denmark, a key part of the heathland-to-infield turf cycle operated by way of the domestic hearth, with turf ashes recycled to a household ash midden before being incorporated into the plaggen dunghill and spread on the fields (Gormsen 1991, 110). Far from being an inferior fuel, heather turves were here preferred to peat as they burned slowly, keeping the fire going throughout the night (Lerche 1970, 151). Interestingly, Scottish sources show an awareness of turf fuel use on the Continent:

'As soon as the Dutch have sown their spring corn, they begin to prepare the turf for winter fuel. They...squeeze the mud, while soft, into round forms, resembling loaves,...and then let them dry the fields...' (OSA Vol. 11, 463: Eddertoun, Ross and Cromarty).

Nevertheless, by the time of the First Statistical Account, turf cutting prohibitions were beginning to encroach upon turf fuel use in Scotland, sometimes causing great hardship:

'...great distance from coal, and a total want of every other species of fuel. This is a real calamity to the poor; and most heavily felt by them since they were, some years

ago, all prohibited from casting turf on the moors. Every cottager used to have liberty from his master to cast a darg or two of turf.' (OSA Vol. 19, 129: Roxburgh).

The historical records surrounding turf cutting in Scotland suggest that deep anthropogenic topsoils are most likely to be found in areas within which restrictions on cutting turf from pasture grounds—not only for manure but also for building and fuel—were either not implemented or were ignored (Illus. 45). This is supported by evidence from Papa Stour, Shetland, whose deep topsoils were created using peaty turves which were taken from the hill grazing until this was scalped (Fenton 1978, 223).

However, it would seem that a lack of deep topsoils in Scotland may not only be a result of government prohibition, but also of manuring choices made by farmers themselves—particularly in the marginal areas where intensive manuring systems may have been expected to exist:

'Every kind of sea-ware is used for manure, and is found to answer the soil best, probably from the great quantity of salt, sea-ware contains, and the cold nature of the soil. Sea-ware is the only manure that answers mossy ground.' (OSA Vol. 14, 181: Western Mull and Iona, Argyll).

'Even the dung of their cattle, which is at their hand, and which is generally considered as an excellent manure, rather than be at the pains to carry to their fields, they in some places throw into the sea, by way of a peace offering to Neptune, in order to render him propitious in casting ashore for them plenty of sea-weed, which is the only substance they consider as a valuable manure.' (OSA 17, 229: Shapinsay, Orkney)

Seaweed was one of the key manure resources available to pre-Improvement Scottish farmers and, although the actions of the Shapinsay farmers seem incredible, this illustrates the very strong preference for seaweed over dung and compost manure in certain areas that is repeatedly cited through the First Statistical Account and other historical sources, for a variety of reasons. Equivalent to animal dung in nitrogen content, and crucially, twice as rich in potassium (Fenton 1986, 48), seaweed was particularly preferred in sandy coastal areas, whose soils are often potassium-deficient, such as the machair areas of the Western Isles, where dung-based composts were also described as too wet and heavy to 'bind' correctly to these light, friable soils (Smith 1994, 99, 109) (Illus. 46). Seaweed was also valued in that, unlike dung, it did not spread weeds into arable areas (Fenton 1986: 50). It is also cited as giving greater returns than dung, but this is difficult to quantify: the only historical account to directly compare the two is that of North Uist, which concludes that seaweed, although 'better', does not enrich

the ground as much as dung (*OSA* Vol. 13, 305). Most importantly, seaweed was preferred to dung and composts for its perceived effects on, especially, the *bere* or barley crop. Barley manured with seaweed was known as '*ware bear*' which, although it produced a small sized grain, was associated with a larger yield (*OSA* Vol. 6, 17) and was considered '*of double value*' by brewers, as it ripened earlier (*OSA* Vol. 13, 225). The preference of cattle and sheep for seaweed manured grass is also noted—that it 'acts as a condiment' (Sinclair 1814, 528). Seaweed was not only used around the coast, but was carted considerable distances inland, was traded, and was valuable enough for coastal gathering rights to be jealously guarded (*OSA* 6, 281), and for seaweed-manured land to attract higher rents (*OSA* Vol. 16, 515). The seaweed resource was so important that in some coastal areas, extra horses were maintained specifically to cart seaweed when storms threw large quantities of it ashore (Fenton 1978, 275).

As a huge amount of seaweed was required for manuring—one arable acre required as much as two hundred creel loads (Dodgshon 1992, 178)—seaweed *was* used with other materials: in Shetland, seaweed was applied in winter, spring and again through the midden when this was spread (Fenton 1978, 275). The County Agricultural Reports, in particular, record that seaweed was generally one of a suite of manures (e.g. Ure 1794, 37; Graham 1814, 316), and frequently mention seaweed composts (Robertson 1808, 112). However, while this allowed seaweed to become a *component* of deep topsoils—pictorial records show a midden of byre-manure and seaweed on Papa Stour, Shetland, as late as 1967 (Fenton 1976, 15)—it was generally believed that seaweed was best spread fresh from the sea, used alone, rather than left in midden heaps or in dunghills—'*better unled than unspread*' (Sinclair 1814, 528). Thus, there is a separation between two quite different modes of fertiliser application, and one that is also visible in the soil record: the deep anthropogenic topsoils recorded at Marwick, Orkney, are located in areas with poor seaweed resources (Simpson 1997, 366).

The role of seaweed in pre-Improvement Scottish agriculture illustrates the importance of the interaction between geography, environment and available resources in influencing the development of deep anthropogenic topsoils. Here, evidence from historical sources dovetails with our knowledge of the soil record to reveal real differences between marginal farming on sandy soils in the Netherlands and in Scotland: despite superficially comparable situations, the frequent availability of seaweed around the rocky Scottish coast, and the suitability of this

particular resource to local soil conditions, appears to have allowed Scottish farmers to successfully cultivate these soils without recourse to the intensive manuring systems seen on the Continent: in fact, to choose to avoid a bulk manuring technique altogether.

However, for Scottish farmers both inland and on the coast, choices in manuring strategy seem to have been influenced not only by available resources, but by the question of security of tenure. A third key issue to emerge from the documentary sources is that of land leasing, and the deleterious effect that short or non-existent leases had upon the impetus to improve the land, by draining, reclaiming, introducing new crops, and especially manuring:

'But improvements by lime, or any other means, is seldom attempted here, for this obvious reason, that the tenants have no leases; they consider themselves as the tenants of a day, and have neither inclination nor spirit to attempt any effectual improvement of the grounds they possess, thinking, and with justness, that another may reap the benefit of all the endeavours they might use to meliorate their farms.' (OSA Vol. 1, 392: Delting, Shetland).

'Short leases were universally granted... If a tenant improved with lime, which very seldom happened, he took care, when his lease was near expired, to take so many crops of oats as to leave his ground in as bad, if not in a worse state, than when he got it.' (OSA Vol. 7, 220: Belhelvie, Aberdeenshire).

Pre-Improvement Scottish farmers were poor in terms of rights to the land they farmed: leases of only five years were known (OSA Vol. 13, 377) and even the more common 19-year lease made manure investment a significant risk (OSA Vol. 2, 101).

The curtailment that this situation is likely to have placed on the intensive, long-term commitment required for deep topsoil manuring is highlighted by comparison with tenurial regulations in the Continental plaggen regions. Of particular interest is the custom known as *'beklem-regt'*, variants of which are seen all over north-western Europe, but which is particularly associated with the Dutch province of Groningen, which is well known for its extensive plaggen soils (de Vries 1974, 16).

The *beklem-regt* was a purchased right of occupancy of a land parcel, at a fixed rent which the proprietor could not raise, and which, once purchased, would pass to the tenant's heir. The tenant could let, mortgage or even sell this occupancy without the proprietor's consent; however, upon doing this, a fine of one or two years' rental would be incurred, and division of the holding by sale or inheritance was prohibited. Although in theory the 'lease' was renewed periodically and the *beklem-regt* could at this time be revoked (as it could should

the tenant wilfully depreciate the holding), in practice this rarely happened, mainly as the proprietor would have to compensate the tenant to the value of the house and farm-buildings (de Laveleye 1878, 273). It can be seen how this more balanced system would promote much greater investment in land improvement: crucially, the tenant was not penalised for improving his land by increased rent, nor was the investment lost at the end of a fixed term. In addition, the prohibition on farm *division* under this system in itself encouraged land improvement: as a tenant could only pass the *beklem-regt* to one heir, high productivity was vital to ensure a money inheritance for other family members. It has been suggested that this regulation, in preventing land-holdings being split into ever smaller portions, promoted land improvement even more than outright ownership (*ibid.* 276). The debilitating effects of land division of this kind were certainly felt in Scotland: from the Norse system of udal tenure in the Northern Isles (Fenton 1978, 23) to the eighteenth century marginalisation of peasant farmers through large-scale land clearance and the creation of 'crofting' communities (Gray 1984, 14; Smout 1969, 331). In the plaggen soil areas, a level of autonomy facilitated by security of tenure appears to have allowed peasant farmers to improve their lands to the point at which they could take advantage of market demands, by taking risks on new crops (de Vries 1974, 147). This would not be seen in Scotland until much later, when, however, similar changes would spur Scottish farmers into land improvement through investment not in bulk manuring programmes, but in modern manures such as lime.

Given the many disincentives to bulk manuring which historical sources suggest existed for farmers in the sandy, marginal areas of Scotland which we might associate with plaggen-type soils, what positive indicators for deep topsoils are seen in the historical record? Ongoing research suggests that two quite different contexts may provide an answer. Identification through this project of two deep topsoils connected to urban contexts (McKenzie, forthcoming) suggests that a Scottish connection with the Continental plaggen soil tradition may be through patterns of urban-influenced rather than rural manuring strategies. Although deep topsoils have been found in many urban Scottish historical contexts (e.g. Mackenzie 1998; Carter 2001), accepted wisdom has been to connect these with the mechanics of urban waste disposal rather than deliberate cultivation strategies. But this may be a false premise. Human dung is rated highly by Improvement period writers (Somerville 1796, 34), and although only mentioned in records

from larger towns, where considerations of carriage and disposal come into play (Sinclair 1814, 525–6), it is clearly a valuable resource, with several reports of town authorities charging high prices for waste which they had once paid the farmers to remove (*OSA* Vol. 18, 362). Due to its richness, human manure was composted with proportionally larger amounts of mineral than animal dungs—‘*two cart-loads of ordure mixed with ten loads of earth, and one of lime*’ (Somerville 1796, 35), and sources note that lands near urban centres were ‘*gradually enriched, to the distance of six or eight miles.*’ (Sinclair 1814, 525). Despite the perception of the Continental plaggen manuring system as a rural concern, intensive manuring throughout these regions in fact depended heavily on urban manures, with urban waste traded from large centres such as Amsterdam and Utrecht, and free nightsoil offered as an incentive to land reclamation programmes in the Groningen district (de Vries 1974, 150–51). It may be that Scottish urban deep topsoils are more closely related to the plaggen soil tradition than has been assumed.

A second connection between deep topsoils in Scotland and on the Continent has been proposed for those identified on Orkney, with the suggestion that a plaggen manuring system was introduced to the area through the monastic community of the Isle of Birsay in the West Mainland: the Birsay monastery was a part of the archbishopric of Hamburg-Bremen, Germany, where plaggen manuring was practiced (Simpson 1993, 8; Guttmann 2001, 207). Interestingly, the development of the beklem-regt is also attributed to early monastic land tenure regulations (de Laveleye 1878, 272). Although this link is conjectural, there has been an increasing recognition that intensive manuring techniques appear to have a strong connection with monastic cultivation from a variety of contexts, with deep topsoils recorded from the monastic settlements at Iona (Barber 1981) and Fearn Abbey in Easter Ross (Guttmann 2001). More recently, deep topsoils have been recorded on several Scottish islands located in the Western and Northern Isles with links to the ‘*papar*’, or Celtic missionary priests of the pre-Norse period (Simpson and Guttmann 2002; Ballin-Smith *et al.* 2005).

This paper has illustrated that, although deep anthropogenic topsoils were a feature of pre-Improvement Scotland, their development was influenced by not only agricultural concerns, but socioeconomic issues concerning legislation, land administration and ownership—and the knock-on effects of these on attitudes to resource management. The combination of historical source data with soil-based research has not

only provided an important insight into a key area of the rural economy in the eighteenth century, but has indicated potential areas for future study into Scottish deep topsoils. It is clear that historical records for rural land management can be related to anthropogenic soil studies at a variety of scales, and the interaction of these very different disciplines can play an important role in setting landscape-based studies of post-Medieval settlement in a firmer historical geographical context.

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STOBISTER, SINNABIST AND STARRAPUND: THREE WILDERNESS SETTLEMENTS IN SHETLAND

Brian Smith

I start with a brief and simplified history of settlement in Shetland. People have lived in the islands for more than 6000 years, and until the nineteenth century the vast majority of them stayed in rural places. We do not know as much as we would like about the settlements of the earliest inhabitants. We assume that most of them lived near the coast, like most of their successors, but the main evidence we have is about the homes that some of them established in Shetland's hills. The climate and soil in the earliest Neolithic times was better than it became later, and some of those early Shetlanders lived in places that no-one would never occupy again. A classic example is the long-lived settlement at the Scord of Brouster in Sandsting, an extremely inhospitable place today, but occupied for more than a thousand years in the Stone Age (Whittle 1986).

During the Bronze Age, partly because of deterioration in the weather, and afterwards, people moved nearer the shore. We know less about the places where Shetlanders lived in the Iron Age, because archaeologists have not found many examples of their houses. Brochs certainly were not houses, in the normal sense of that term, unless we assume that Shetlanders of the broch era chose to live in out-of-the-way and relatively infertile places, like Mousa, Hawksness in Tingwall, or Sotersta, near Culswick in Sandsting. I suspect that our Iron Age ancestors also lived around the shore, exactly where their Bronze Age predecessors had lived, and where their Pictish and Viking and modern successors would also live.

In the ninth century people came to Shetland from Scandinavia, and during the following centuries those newcomers occupied nearly every scrap of arable land in the islands. They avoided some of the most marginal places where the Stone Age Shetlanders had lived, but they occupied all the good land around the coast, and in many cases improvable land inshore. We know the places where these Scandinavian people lived, not so much because of archaeology—most of their houses have disappeared—but because they paid a tax for their arable land

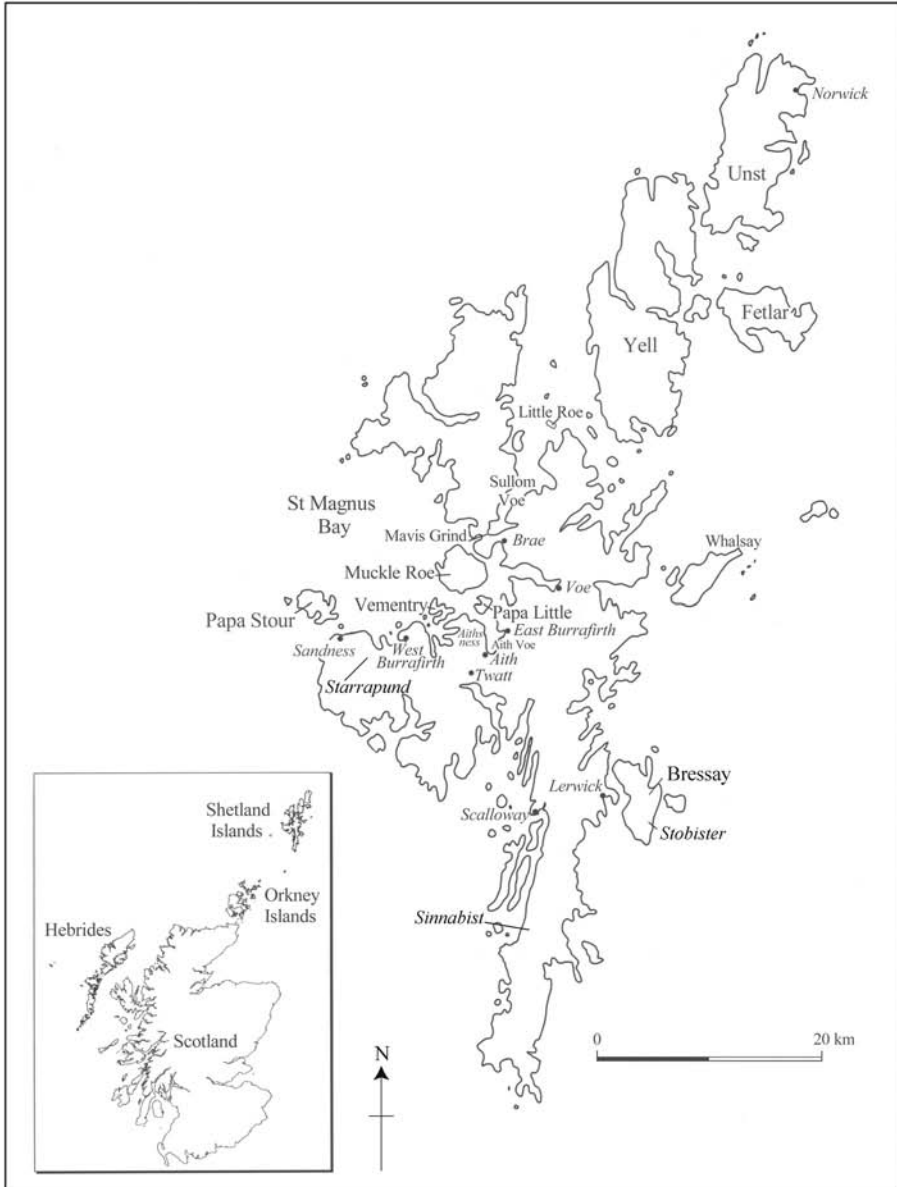
called scat, and because they divided up their townships in units called merks of land. The scats that they paid, and the number of merks of land in each township, are recorded in documents (Smith 2000). We can sometimes hazard a guess about the age of such settlements from their names: places whose names end in 'bister', for instance, are usually assumed to date from the first couple of centuries of the Scandinavian colonization of the islands. But as we shall see, that was not always the case.

There was no doubt a blip in this history of Shetland settlement, during the late Middle Ages, when the Black Death and other kinds of depression took their toll on the population. Then about the end of the fifteenth century things started to improve again. By Earl Patrick Stewart's time, around 1600, there were probably about 10,000–12,000 Shetlanders (Donaldson 1958, 135–6), and they occupied, or had reoccupied, most of the settlements that had been inhabited during the Middle Ages. They still paid scat for them, and they still measured them in merks of land.

There were bad times again at the end of the seventeenth century, thanks to smallpox, and bad weather, and foreign wars, and a few places went out of use again, briefly. But that was a very short interlude. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the economy of Shetland boomed, and between 1760 and 1860, with smallpox conquered, the population doubled (Thomson 1983). Since the Scandinavian and early modern settlement of the islands had involved all the good land, much of that burgeoning modern population had to live in the increasingly crowded ancient townships, or on what were called 'ootsets': outlying parts of the old arable land, or even (a return to the Stone Age habit) scraps of land in the hills.

The reason I present this long introduction is to suggest that we understand the history of Shetland settlement relatively well. Most of it, from Bronze Age until Victorian times, was clustered near the shore, with outlying settlement in the hills in Neolithic times and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this paper, however I deal with a small number of settlements which diverge from the normal pattern: Stobister in Bressay, Sinnabist, between Sandwick and Cunningsburgh, and Starrapund in Sandness, and some others that I have spotted from time to time (Illus 47).

Stobister, Sinnabist and Starrapund are old settlements, and I shall argue that two of them at least were occupied during the Stone Age. But none of them is mentioned in taxation lists, and none of them, I



Illus. 47 Map of Shetland with place names highlighted.

am pretty certain, was inhabited after 1500. What makes the situation more interesting still is that there are folk-tales associated with Stobister, Sinnabist and Starrapund, which have made modern Shetlanders assume, wrongly, that they were inhabited in relatively recent times. These places are so unusual that people struggle to make sense of them.

Stobister

I deal first with Stobister. It is a small settlement on the east side of the island of Bressay (Illus 48), a mile south of its nearest neighbours on that coast, and a mile and a half east of Kirkabister on Lerwick Sound. Stobister is one of Shetland's wilderness settlements. What we see if we go there is a little house, which seems to comprise two square rooms, with its own yard. The settlement has no hill dyke. From the building plan alone we can assume immediately that Stobister was not a prehistoric building, because it is not oval in shape, or a Viking house, because it is not long and rectangular. (I am very grateful to Biddy Simpson for visiting Stobister for me, in February 2001, and for looking at it with an archaeologist's eye.)

The fact that Stobister has a 'bister' name, like its nearest neighbours, suggests that it was inhabited during the period when Scandinavian naming was well underway in the islands. It is difficult to know what the whole name means. I suggest, without any certainty, that it may be similar to the name Stobreck in Hillswick, which appears in old documents as 'Stovabreck': the slope with the wooden house (O.N. *stofa*: a name element beloved of Barbara Crawford!) on it. In other words, Stobister may mean the farm with the wooden house. But I put forward the suggestion with due caution.

From all these circumstances—its marginal position, its name and the shape of its house—I suggest that Stobister was occupied after the initial centuries of Scandinavian settlement. I wonder if a settlement in such an out-of-the-way place might have become established in the thirteenth century, when the population of the islands was growing rapidly. The interesting thing about Stobister is that it is never mentioned in documents from the period after 1550, and such an omission would be unprecedented, in my experience, if it was in fact occupied then. It never appears in a taxation list or charter, and it is never said

to comprise any number of merks of land. My hunch is that Stobister existed for a relatively short time, on the verge of the late Middle Ages, that it went out of use during the late medieval depressions, and that it was never reoccupied—not even in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when land in Shetland was at a premium.

Some people find this proposed history difficult to believe. Sitting there in the hill, with its little yard, Stobister looks like a relatively modern settlement. There are still several courses of stone standing at the shore side of the house (Illus 49). But none of that means that the house is modern, of course. Only a few hundred yards north of Stobister is one of Shetland's archaeological wonders (although I suspect that only a handful of Shetlanders have seen or even heard of it): the 'indeterminate structure' (as the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland called it) in the banks near the big stack of Stoura Clett. This prehistoric building, whatever age it is, still stands to nearly six feet in height. It makes Stobister look like a hopeless ruin.

People in Bressay tell stories about the people who lived at Stobister, as if they are just over the horizon of memory. The late Tammy Laurenson of Gorie, a mile and a quarter north of Stobister, said that the place became unliveable in after a huge storm, a tempest so fierce that olicks poured down the lum (Wills 2007, 28–9). Others say that the people there, assisted by friends from Kirkabister, lowered their corn over the cliffs into a boat to be transported to Noss, presumably because they went to live there after the deluge (personal communication, Laurence Anderson, 2001). I do not mean to suggest that these stories are bogus: they might be faint echoes of real events. But they do not prove, or even suggest, that anyone has lived at Stobister in recent centuries.

According to another story, an Orcadian who had a lease of Noss took a few oxen from the isle across to plough up the land at Stobister (personal communication, Laurence Anderson, 2001). This tale must refer to the Orkneyman James Copland, who lived at and farmed in Noss during the early decades of the nineteenth century (Robertson 1991, 30). Clearly Stobister was uninhabited then, and, as I have said, the lack of references to it in any surviving document suggests that it is one of Shetland's few permanently deserted settlements from the Middle Ages.

Sinnabist

Sinnabist resembles Stobister, but it has an entirely different history. Once again it is in the wilderness, a mile from its nearest neighbour to the south, Deepdale. It lies on the side of the hill at the southmost part of Clift Soond, a tiny green spot in the hill, facing the little isle of Havera (Illus 50). Again it has a 'bister' name, this time with the '-er' at the end clipped off, like 'bister'-names in Orkney. Almost any place-name scholar will tell you that a 'bister' settlement in Shetland or Orkney has to date from the first centuries of the Norse settlement. But Sinnabist is pretty clearly a prehistoric building, an oval house with two cells (Illus 51), with a large yard on the south side of it. There is a bare possibility, from some archaeological features in the middle of it, that it might have been reoccupied, perhaps briefly, sometime in the Middle Ages (Val Turner, 1991). We cannot be sure.

What we can say is that a 'bister'-name attached to such a place is not as unlikely as some of the place-name academics might suggest. There is evidence, not just from Shetland but from Orkney as well, that names in 'bister' went on being bestowed for a very long time. The most striking example in Shetland is the little outset called Grindabister, at the hill dyke of Camb in Mid Yell, which seems to have been named in the first half of the nineteenth century. Peder Gammeltoft, in his magisterial survey of 'bister'-names, calls this type of naming 'analogical' (Gammeltoft 2001, 288–95): people knew that there were old names in Shetland ending in 'bister', and they went on using the element over a long period. In the case of Grindabister, for instance, there is an old 'bister' settlement, Utrabister, in the vicinity. We do not know the original name of the prehistoric settlement at Sinnabist, but Shetlanders in more recent centuries recognised that it had been a settlement, and gave it a 'bister' name. For another example, Sindrabister in South Yell, see Ballantyne 1987, 35–6. Sinnabist probably means 'the farm of withered grass' (Jakobsen 1936, 32), and that is a very good description of it.

Like Stobister, Sinnabist caught the popular imagination. In 1828, when there was a court case about the boundaries between the scattalds of Channerwick and Sandwick, several witnesses referred to 'the old town of Sinnabister' as a landmark (Shetland Archives, SC 12/6/1826/40a), as if it had been occupied in the not-too-distant past. Those nineteenth century Shetlanders did not dream that Sinnabist was a score of centuries old.

And there are several folk-tales about the place, just as there were stories about Stobister. I am grateful to Robert Leask for regaling me with them, during a memorable picnic at Sinnabist in 1991. In one of the stories an old man at Sinnabist says to another, at Lunabister in Dunrossness: ‘If du’ll gie me a barrel o grots, I can gie dee a barrel o sparls’. (If you give me a barrel of corn, I shall give you one of sheep’s entrails.) The suggestion is that the inhabitants of Sinnabist were not farmers, like their neighbours in the arable parts of the parish, but that they were sheep-farmers—or sheep-thieves.

They were sheep-thieves. Robert heard another story about Sinnabist, from the late Lowrie Mullay of Bigton. The last occupants of Sinnabist, according to Lowrie, were two old women. Sheep went missing from the scattald, and the women, it was noted, were selling cheap mutton at Cunningsburgh. So the men of the district went to Sinnabist to remove everything that could be used as a knife. But still sheep disappeared. Eventually the men came to Sinnabist after nightfall and listened at the lum. They heard one of the women say: ‘Noo dat da moon has risen, All go doon ta Bodie Geo for a spoot shell ta tak da life o da beast’. The men then entered the house, and found one of the missing sheep tied up at the resting-chair.

None of these stories is likely to be true. As I said, Sinnabist is a prehistoric settlement. But it looked like a house, inhabited by real people, not just a ruckle of stones in the hill. So people imagined that it was more modern than it was, and began to populate it.

Starrapund

The same is true of Starrapund, my third wilderness site. It is at the north end of the loch of Mousavord in Sandness, a mile west of the little township of Kellister, and a mile south of Busta. Like Stobister and Sinnabist, Starrapund never features in any historical document. What we see there today is very problematical. The house or houses of Starrapund have been demolished to make a large ‘snowbuil’, a shelter for sheep in bad weather: nothing is left of the house but a large pile of stones, as far as my inexperienced eye can judge (Illus 52). Round the whole place is a massive dyke, terminating on each side in the loch (Illus. 53).

At first sight Starrapund looks like a settlement with its own hill dyke, built to keep animals away from the crops. But the more I look at the

place, and the more I have discussed it with Ian Tait, an expert about Shetland's vernacular architecture, and with Robert Leask, the more sceptical I have become about the interpretation. An old settlement in such a marginal situation cannot have had many crops, and it would not have needed an extensive hill dyke. Recall Stobister, where there was no hill dyke at all. People do not like building dykes, or keeping them up, and there is evidence that, the further back you go, the more Shetlanders depended on dogs and children, rather than dykes, to keep beasts away from their crops.

So what is the history of Starrapund? I think there was a prehistoric house there, or more than one. There is a lot of stone on the site: more, I think, than would have been generated by a single Stone Age house. Eventually it was abandoned. A place so far from the sea would not have been a favourite place for reoccupation after the Middle Ages. Instead the stones were subsequently used to make a large animal enclosure. Hence the massive dyke, and hence the common Shetland place name element 'pund', which simply means an enclosure for animals. (I do not venture a guess about the meaning of the first part of the name.)

Such a development is not common in Shetland, but there are places throughout the islands where there were such enclosures, usually on the coast: there are several examples in Fetlar, a good example at Weinnianess, between Waas and Sandness, and an enormous one in north-west Unst called Flubersgardie.

This feature of Shetland's landscape history is so little-known today that it deserves more attention. Nowadays we imagine the typical Shetland settlement of the past as a few houses surrounded by a stock-proof hill dyke. But two hundred years ago, as I have hinted already, Shetlanders were not so keen on hill dykes. There is a fascinating account of what the people of Fetlar did to preserve their crops from animals around 1800, among some notes by the antiquary Laurence Williamson in the Shetland Archives (D7/43/1):

The Fetlar sheep came home about Hallowmas and fed in the towns... till the last of May and first of June, when they were put to the hill... While at the hill, that is from June to Hallowmas, they were *punded* every night... [People] rode on a horse and drove the sheep with a dog to the pund, which was usually a bold headland, with a high dyke on the land side, that the sheep could not jump out over. The dyke had a little door through it. The sheep went in through it or jumped in over the dyke. The same family or some obliging friend who was nearer let them out in the morning.

And Williamson adds that someone who neglected to pund his or her sheep had to pay compensation if the stray animals wandered back to the township. I suggest that it was punning of this kind that was eventually going on at Starrapund.

Whatever the history and development of the place, people in Sandness knew that there had been a house there once upon a time. So we find the same kinds of tales about Starrapund that we found at Stobister and Sinnabist. One of them is very startling indeed. There is a story about a conversation between an old man at Starrapund and another at the little place called Millhaugh in Sandness. The old man of Starrapund said to the old man at Millhaugh—yes, you’ve guessed it—‘If du gies me a barrel o bere, A’ll gie dee a barrel o spars’. When Gordon Walterson told me that story, during a visit to Starrapund in June 1993, I nearly fell down with surprise. It is almost incredible that we have an identical story about Sinnabist and Starrapund, fifty miles apart as they are.

Gordon told me another significant story about Starrapund. Around 1900 Dr Edward Jamieson, the well-known anatomist and antiquarian, was home on a visit to his native Sandness. During a visit he told Gordon’s grandparents that Starrapund had been inhabited by an old man and a young lass. They were called Ewenson, according to Jamieson, and they were relations of another family of Ewensons who lived at a place called da Staney Pund. Once again we have a well-established but quite erroneous notion, believed in firmly on this occasion by an expert on Shetland lore, that an ancient settlement had been inhabited in the not-too-distant past.

‘Norway Lands’

I have said several times that there are no documentary references to Stobister, Sinnabist or Starrapund. That almost certainly proves that there were no people living in any of them during the past 500 years or so. But there is one document, a mysterious paper that throws light on some of the problems that I have raised. It is among the Vaila papers in the Shetland Archives (D10/1/10). It seems to have been written down around 1700—the approximate date of its handwriting—but it purports to be a copy of something written maybe 120 years earlier. It is headed ‘A rentall of Norway lands lying in the hills of Zetland belonging to

Mr Robert Cheyne of Valey.’ Robert Cheyne was the landlord of the Vaila estate, on the Westside of Shetland, in the late sixteenth century. There follows a list of 24 names of places in the parishes of Weisdale, Sandsting and Aithsting, Waas and Sandness.

The names in the document are intensely interesting. The first two are Kirkaby in Weisdale, and Brimma, south of Sandsound in Aithsting. Both these places are marked on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map, and I have had a look in the surveyors’ Name-Books to see what they made of them. Brimma, they said, is ‘a ruin...generally supposed in the neighbouring district to have been the home of a Danish settler’. Writing about Kirkaby they said that it ‘appears to have been a circular building...It is supposed to have existed at the same time as Brima, and also to have been the residence of a Danish settler. [It is] known in the neighbourhood as Picts’ buildings’.

What we have here, as in Robert Cheyne’s document, are people—the map-makers, and the Shetlanders who gave them their information—struggling to make sense of Shetland’s past. There were settlements in the hills that seemed to be old: maybe they were ‘Norway lands’, the homes of ‘Danish settlers’; maybe they were Pictish. In 1590, when Robert Cheyne wrote, and even in 1878, when the Ordnance Survey were doing their work, no-one understood the history of Shetland. There was a vague impression that there had been people called Picts in the islands, and Norwegians, or Danes, but no-one knew much about them, or when they had flourished. All they knew was that there were old abandoned settlements in the hills where some or all of these people had lived: places like Stobister, Sinnabist and Starrapund.

I have no idea why Robert Cheyne prepared his list of ‘Norway lands’: I doubt if he was much of an antiquarian. Maybe he regarded the places as ripe for settlement, or for use as animal enclosures, like Starrapund. Some of the places he mentioned did become settlements: Kellister, for instance, Starrapund’s near neighbour, or Grunnaquee, at the Ayres of Selivoe in Sandsting. Others were, or became, animal enclosures. The best example in the list is Stourapund, underneath Stourburgh Hill in Waas: the big pund.

Other places on Cheyne’s list, like Kirkaby and Brimma, had been settlements in ancient times, but were never reinhabited. Another good example is the place called Da Trulligerts, beside Lungawater on the Sandness road, which is clearly an ancient settlement. A local antiquary has written a brilliant article about it, where he argues that it was the site of a prehistoric quarry (Peterson 1971). In 1992 Linda Grains,

a native of Waas, told me that an old-timer had told her father that connexions of his had lived there relatively recently. Once again that curious idea that our not-too-distant ancestors, even our relatives, lived in these ancient places.

Conclusion

I conclude with two general points that have gradually occurred to me as I have walked round Shetland over the years, looking at settlements from every age.

My first point is about the *variety* of the structures that we find in Shetland's hills. Clearly there are some settlements that have been very successful. People have been exploiting the best arable land in the islands since Neolithic times. But there are places that have been inhabited for a short time, and then abandoned. Two good examples out of dozens are the little Stone Age house at Swaefield in South Nesting, where you can still see the well that the folk used, or the eighteenth-century ootset at Da Veng on the south coast of Bressay, abandoned around 1800. Stobister, Starrapund and Sinnabist fall into this category: a house from the late Middle Ages and two prehistoric dwellings, one of which became an animal enclosure. All flourished for a shorter or longer period, and were then abandoned, leaving evidence of different kinds of settlement and husbandry. These places are deviant in the history of Shetland settlement: so much so that Shetlanders have struggled to understand and explain them.

My final point is more general. There are few places where the past, exemplified by the houses where people lived, and the townships that they occupied—be they ever so humble—is as *visible* and *real* as it is in Shetland. Orkney has monuments which are wonders of the world: Maeshowe and Skara Brae and the Tomb of the Eagles. These are monuments built by rich men and women and powerful communities. But Orcadians do not have landscapes full of ancient houses and townships. I do not mean that our archaeology is *better* than Orkney's—clearly it is not—but that it is *different*. It is fine to see the tombs of Orkney's ruling class. But it is fascinating to see the homes of ordinary Shetland men and women, the inhabitants of Stobister, and Sinnabist, and Starrapund, in much the same landscapes that those men and women saw from their doors a hundred or seven hundred or even five thousand years ago.

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GOVERNOR ON ANTIQUARIAN MISSION,
CHRISTIAN PLOÏYEN—A FAROESE LINK BETWEEN
COPENHAGEN AND SHETLAND

Steffen Stummann Hansen

Prelude

In 1825 the Society of Northern Antiquaries (from 1828 the *Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries*) was founded in Copenhagen. One of its founders was Carl Christian Rafn (1795–1864) who acted as its secretary from its foundation until his death in 1864 (Illus. 54). His ambition was to secure the Society with members from all over the world and an impressive network was established, especially during the 1830–40s. The benefits of this were twofold. The world-wide network was an important instrument for Rafn to distribute his own works but it also provided the Society with important funding through the membership fees. On top of this it also provided the Society, and thereby the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen (later the National Museum), with antiquities from all over the world (Jensen and Jensen 1988).

Rafn early established contact with Christian Pløyen (1803–67), the leading Danish administrator—*Amtmand*—in the Faroe Islands. Pløyen soon provided the Society, and thereby the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen, with a flow of Faroese antiquities (Illus. 55). However, as we shall see, Pløyen soon also came to play an instrumental role in relation to the antiquities of Shetland. Thus, when Pløyen in 1839 embarked upon a journey to Orkney and Shetland, Rafn saw the possibility of establishing a foothold here.

On 1 June 1839 the young Danish civil servant set out from Tórshavn in the Faroe Islands bound for Shetland and Orkney. The purpose of his tour was to study any improvements in agriculture and living conditions in general which could be useful to introduce to the Faroe Islands. In Pløyen's own words:

From conversing with various Shetlanders of both upper and lower classes, who, from time to time, have visited Faroe; from reading Dr Edmondston's Description of Shetland; and, moreover, from having seen these islands in the distance several times when sailing past them, I had become convinced

that there is a great similarity of soil and climate in the two groups, though Shetland has reached a higher state of development. I therefore judged that it might be advantageous to visit Shetland, accompanied by two or three intelligent Faroese, and endeavour to become acquainted with such improvements as might be available here (Pløyen 1894, XIII).

Pløyen was accompanied by Poul Joensen (1778–1850), a udaller of Eiðe in Eysturoy, Poul Joensen (?1797–1857), a fisherman and boat-builder from the island of Nólsoy, and peasant proprietor Mourits Mohr (1820–57) of Hoyvík near Tórshavn.¹

Pløyen was, in his own words “provided with an open letter of credit to draw on the Danish Vice-Consul in Lerwick, Mr. C. Ogilvy, for any money required by me and my companions; with passports from the Foreign Department in Denmark, and the English Ambassador at Copenhagen; and lastly, a letter of recommendation from the Royal Exchequer to the authorities of those places that I proposed to visit” (Pløyen 1894, XV). When Pløyen arrived at Lerwick he was received by Charles Ogilvy (1802–44) of Seafeld, who had a summer residence a quarter of a mile west of Lerwick, and who introduced Pløyen to Shetland society (Pløyen 1894, 13ff.). During his stay in Shetland, Pløyen met with a number of individuals with an interest in matters antiquarian.

While in Lerwick, Pløyen was contacted by John Glendinning Bryden (1787–1855), the parish minister of Sandsting on Mainland Shetland. Bryden had met Pløyen while visiting the Faroe Islands and now invited Pløyen to his residence in Sandsting (Pløyen 1894, 55). Pløyen was also hosted by Captain William Cameron Mouat (1780–1855) of Garth at his residence *Gardie House* on the island of Bressay (Pløyen 1894, 145). Pløyen later accompanied him during a visit to the island of Unst where Cameron Mouat hosted him at his estate there, *Belmont* (Pløyen 1894, 176). In Unst Pløyen visited important archaeological sites such as the stone-circles at Crucifield and the so-called King Harald Haarfager’s grave (Pløyen 1894, 178–9).

Pløyen also visited the small island of Uyea off the south coast of Unst where he met the owner of the island, Mrs. Margaret Leisk (1765–1843).² Pløyen stated: “At the pretty little island of Uyea, which

¹ Pløyen published his account in Danish in 1840 (Pløyen 1840).

² Margaret McMurdo, daughter of George McMurdo of Dumfries, Scotland, was born in 1765 (Tony Gott website). She married Thomas Leisk, merchant at Burravoe

belongs to Unst, I was so fortunate as to be presented by the proprietress, Mrs Leisk, with a stone urn, which had been dug up there. I have sent it, with some other Shetland curiosities, to the Northern Antiquarian Museum at Copenhagen” (Pløyen 1894, 179). Pløyen subsequently visited the island of Yell and brought as a travelling companion Gilbert Spence (c.1788–1850) of Hamar, whom he described as ‘a worthy laird from Unst’ (Pløyen 1894, 180–1). Spence had a keen interest in matters antiquarian. Thus, in a letter of 5 January 1822 to Thomas Irvine at Midbrake, he had asked for a Danish grammar ‘in the expectation that it might serve as a key to unlock a great store of local antiquity—a study of which I am very fond’.³ Pløyen also spent time in Edinburgh where among other things he visited the Antiquarian Museum. This, however, did not seem to impress him much: “the Antiquarian Museum, which is both rich and interesting, but not well arranged, containing many objects which cannot be considered as antiquities. There was not the slightest trace of systematic arrangement, and the Old Norse Museum at Copenhagen is far before that of Edinburgh” (Pløyen 1894, 108–9).

Pløyen left Shetland on 5 September:

I quitted Shetland in the schooner *Lerwick*, which my friend Ogilvy kindly granted me for my voyage home. With a deep and sincere feeling of friendship and gratitude, I bade farewell to a family and a circle where I had so quickly and entirely become accustomed to feel myself at home. Ogilvy, Hay, and several other gentlemen accompanied me on horseback to Scalloway, where the vessel was lying, and soon I was far from my Shetland friends, whom I shall probably never see again, but who will always live in my memory. After a long and tedious voyage, I arrived on Monday, the 9th of September, again at Thorshavn, and found there, God be praised! all as I had left it (Pløyen 1894, 237).

in Shetland in 1801. They eventually lived in the island of Uyea, just south of Unst. Thomas Leisk, who was a ‘taxman’ of various Shetland estates, was noted for his robust defences of landlord power in Shetland. He died in 1837, and she on 16 January 1843.

³ Shetland Archives (D.16/387/48). The information about Gilbert Spence of Hamar is sparse. He lived at Hamar north the voe at Baltasound, and had a small estate in mid and north Unst. As well as a proprietor he was a land surveyor, and surveyed various properties in the North Isles in the 1830–40s.

The recruitment

Pløyen acted immediately after his return to Tórshavn. On 11 September he sent a letter to Rafn informing him on the acquaintances he had made with Shetland antiquarians: 'On a journey, funded by public money, during the past summer, I have been so fortunate, among other places, to visit the Shetland Isles. I have in these islands, which in an antiquarian respect were very peculiar and well deserved to be surveyed by a Dane, who was more knowledgeable than I with regard to Danish antiquities and coins, acquired the following objects....'.⁴

Rafn quickly followed up on Pløyen's information. On 9 November 1839 he wrote a formal invitation for membership of the Society to John Bryden, the parish minister of Sandsting. Bryden replied to Rafn from his manse of Sandsting on 2 January 1841: 'I want words to express my sense of the high honour the Directors of the Royal Society propose to confer upon me. I request, however, that you will be pleased to thank them in my name, for this mark of distinction'.⁵

Rafn, on the same day as he approached Bryden, also wrote to Charles Ogilvy in Lerwick who, like Bryden, felt honoured by the invitation. Ogilvy replied to Rafn in a letter of 16 February 1841: 'It was only lately that I had the honour to receive your letter of 9 Nov. 1839, which came to me in a parcel via Leith, which will explain the cause of my delay in answering it. The honour which the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries propose to confer upon me is quite unexpected and undeserved, but I shall consider it a high distinction to become a Member of such a body. Should any opportunity offer itself to me for promoting the interests of the Society I shall not fail to communicate the same to you'.⁶

In a letter of 5 December 1840 Rafn also approached Cameron Mouat, who immediately accepted the offer for membership: 'this very

⁴ Letter of 11 September 1839 from Pløyen in Tórshavn to Rafn in Copenhagen. Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (649). Author's translation from Danish.

⁵ Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1341), author's translation from Danish. It has not been possible to trace Rafn's letter to Bryden. Pløyen also later, in company with Charles Duncan, stayed a few days at Bryden's residence on their way to Ronas Hill (Pløyen 1894, 182). Bryden had published an account on Sandsting and Aithsting parishes, in which he also describes their monuments and antiquities (Bryden 1841).

⁶ Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1371), author's translation from Danish. It has not been possible to trace Rafn's letter to Charles Ogilvy.

distinguished honour is as unexpected as it is unmerited on my post, and I beg you will assure the Royal Society of Northern Antiquarians that I highly appreciate this testimony of their esteem and respect'.⁷ On 5 April 1841 Pløien wrote to Rafn in Copenhagen: 'Sir, Councillor of State Rafn! Those gentleman, whom I have proposed for membership of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, are Consul Ch. Ogilvy, Capt. Cameron-Mouatt (*sic*) of Garth, Rev. S. V. Barclay,⁸ minister of Lerwick, Rev. Mr. Hamilton,⁹ Rev. of Bressay, and Rev. Mr. Bryden, minister of Sandsting; Ogilvy has informed me, that they all with gratitude accept the offer, and regard my proposal as an honour to them.—I still hope that all five gentlemen will be accepted as members'.¹⁰

The Copenhagen investment quickly paid off. On 11 May 1841 Cameron Mouat wrote to Rafn:

I have been endeavouring to procure some of the ancient "Steinbarts" (or "Thunderbolts" as the common people of "Ultima Thule" call them) but they are extremely scarce in consequence of being much sought for by the numerous strangers who have visited our Islands of late years,—and if there are any Steinbarts still remaining the common people, who generally found them either embedded in peat moss, or buried in their arable ground along with what appeared to them to be ancient urns containing the remains of departed warriors, are very reluctant to part with the supposed thunderbolts from a superstitious idea that any house which possesses one of these valuable thunderbolts will be effectually protected from lightning. I have however succeeded in procuring a few "Steinbarts" of different shapes, and as the Belgian Schooner of War the "Louise

⁷ Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1342), author's translation from Danish. It has not been possible to trace Rafn's letter to Cameron Mouat.

⁸ Thomas Barclay was born in Unst in 1792, a son of James Barclay, the parish minister. He got his elementary education in Unst and went to Aberdeen, where he graduated MA in 1812. After a stint as a journalist he entered the Church of Scotland ministry in the 1820s. After a short period at Dunrossness in Shetland he served as minister at Lerwick from 1827–43. He became principal of Glasgow University in 1858 and served in that capacity till his death in 1873 (Graham 2004, 38).

⁹ Zachary Macaulay Hamilton (1805–76) was born in Hoy in Orkney, and admitted as minister of Bressay, Burra and Quarff in Shetland in 1833. His second wife was daughter of Capt. William Cameron Mouat of Annsbrae. Pløien described their meeting: 'Next morning, I again went on board the steamer Sovereign. There were many passengers, among others the minister of Bressa, one of the Shetland Isles, the Rev. Z. Hamilton, a very amiable person, with whom I had been previously acquainted in Edinburgh, and with whom I had afterwards constant intercourse' (Pløien 1894, 139). Hamilton also accompanied Pløien when he was visiting the islands of Bressay and Noss (Pløien 1894, 144–45).

¹⁰ Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (649), author's translation from Danish.

Marie”, which is on the eve of sailing from Brassay (*sic*) harbour, intends to touch at Thorshaven I now send a small box containing these Steinbarts to my worthy friend H. Exc. Governor Ployen who I have no doubt will embrace the first opportunity of forwarding the Box to you, it contains also a small specimen of the Asbestos that is found in some of our Islands. I request you will do me the honour to present in my name to the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries at Copenhagen the few Steinbarts and Asbestos contained in the box, and to express my regret that I have been unable to procure larger and more perfect Steinbarts.¹¹

Neolithic axes, referred to as ‘Steinbarts’ or ‘Thunderbolts’ were well-known in Shetland. Thus Samuel Hibbert (1782–1848), in 1822, wrote: ‘Regarding the people by whom these stone-axes were used, the natives of Shetland have not the least tradition, and this circumstance is a proof of their great antiquity. They are supposed to have dropt from the clouds, endowed with the power of protecting the houses in which they are preserved from the effects of thunder; hence they are commonly named thunder-bolts’ (Hibbert 1822, 249). John Turnbull (1775–1867), minister of Tingwall in the 1840s, also referred to them: ‘Steinbartes or stone axes called here thunder-bolts, are frequently found, also arrow-heads’ (Turnbull 1841, 59). His colleague, William Stevenson (*c.*1805–84), minister of Northmavine in the 1840s, stated: ‘A few of the people are in possession of the ancient battle-axe, which is carefully concealed in some part of the house, and superstitiously preserved, and it is commonly called a thunderbolt’ (Stevenson 1841, 75).

In 1845, Andrew Duncan of Tow (1776–1847), a former Sheriff of Shetland, was accepted as a member of the Society. In a letter of 25 February Rafn wrote to him:

In consequence of a letter from a member of the Society, Captain Christopher L. Proselius, R[oyal] N[avy], of the 16th of January last proposing your admittance into the Society as a Fellow, I beg to inform you that the proposal was unanimously carried at the annual meeting on the 28th of January and that I shall have the honour in the spring as soon as the shipping season commences to transmit you your diploma as Fellow along with the memoirs of the Society.

¹¹ Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1342). Cameron Mouat became a member of the Society that year. In a letter by Preller and Gabain, London, to Cameron Mouat, they stated: ‘We have had the pleasure to receive your favour of the 21st ultimo with a remittance for £3, 15 6 which we have placed to the credit of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries at Copenhagen, the receipt of which Professor Rafn will be informed of in due course’ (Garoe House Archive).

It affords us much pleasure to have thus formed a new connection in the Shetland islands, which possess so high a degree of interest for us in an antiquarian point of view, and from whence communications are accordingly ever most welcome.

We received a few years ago from Mr. Charles Gilbert Duncan some interesting specimens of antiquity for our museum, for which we feel grateful. Your Christian name being unknown to Captain Proselius, we are ignorant whether it is to yourself, or perhaps to some relation of yours to whom we are indebted (*sic*) for the donation.¹²

Rafn was quite correct that it was not Andrew Duncan, who earlier had presented some Shetland antiquities to the Society. Andrew Duncan replied Rafn in a letter of 18 June the same year:

Sir, I had the pleasure some time ago to receive your letter of the 25th Febr. last, which the interim (*sic*) state of my health with other causes has prevented me hitherto from acknowledging. I am highly indebted to Captain Proselius for the honour conferred upon me in proposing me and to your Honourable Society in electing me a member of their body; and to both I beg to return my best thanks. I am afraid I am too old now to be of much use in promoting to objects of the Society, tho' nothing [would] afford me greater pleasure, should it ever be in my power. I promise however to do all I can for that purpose, as opportunities occur. The young man, Charles Gilbert Duncan, whom you mention is my nephew and a zealous antiquarian. My christian name is Andrew. When you are kind enough to write again, you will oblige me by letting me know what I have to pay as a newly elected member of your Society to whom I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedient Serv. Andr. Duncan.¹³

Subsequently, the same year his nephew, Charles Gilbert Duncan (1816–84), who held the position of Belgian Consul for Orkney and Shetland, also became a member of the Society.¹⁴ Pløien had personally met with Charles Duncan during his visit to Edinburgh in 1839: ‘During my stay in Edinburgh I had become acquainted with a young Shetlander, Mr. C. Duncan, stud. juris, a relative of Consul Ogilvy, and I owe it to this young man, gratefully, to acknowledge the extreme kindness with which he undertook to be both my guide and companion during my stay in the Capital’ (Pløien 1894, 117, 138). In 1845 Charles Gilbert Duncan obviously had already demonstrated a keen interest in

¹² Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1823), author’s translation from Danish.

¹³ Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1823).

¹⁴ Letter from Charles Duncan to Rafn, dated 8 October 1845. Archives of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries (1869).

matters antiquarian, as he had sent a number of Shetland antiquities to the Society in Copenhagen.

Deliverance

Pløyen, through his acquaintances among the educated and landowning circles of the Shetland community, got the opportunity to suggest suitable members of the Society in Copenhagen. Most of the appointed members were either civil servants in the form of ministers, consuls and so on, or powerful landlords, which all, in various degrees, represented an interest in matters antiquarian, including the collecting of antiquarian objects. Thus it was also possible to satisfy Rafn's second aim, namely to acquire Shetland objects for the so-called 'Foreign Prehistoric Collection' in the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen.

This is nicely demonstrated in a collection of archaeological objects, which Pløyen shipped to Rafn in Copenhagen from Tórshavn on 31 August 1843:¹⁵

To
The Royal Antiquities Commission
in Copenhagen

I hereby take the liberty to present to the honoured Commission:

1. one stone axe, found on Mainland Shetland (Illus. 56), and
2. one small coin, found in the parish of Dunrossness; from the same site derive an ancient horn, halves and quarters of coins of similar type, as well as a number of fragmented silver-armlets. I have seen fragments of the armlets in Shetland but was not able to purchase them; Shetland collectors regard the coins as an example of the so-called Danegeld.¹⁶

Both of these objects were stored by Mr. William Bain, a ship-agent in Lerwick, for the purpose of including them in relevant Danish museums. Mr. Bain has a nice small collection of Shetland antiquities and among these the most impressive example of a stone axe I have ever seen; the museum in Copenhagen has not got its like.

¹⁵ Letter from Pløyen to Rafn. Archives of the National Museum of Denmark.

¹⁶ This coin can be identified as a silver penny of Harald Hardrada, still in the collection in Copenhagen today. The coin, and its relationship with the associated hoard, have been discussed by various authors, including Gareth Williams.

3. one antique fragment of bone, unearthed at Unst, in the Shetland Isles, and presented to me by Mr. Spence of Hammer in Unst, as the remains of a comb; although I cannot regard the fragment to be of a comb, I shall not omit to offer it to the museum (Illus. 57).

The information about William Bain's collection is interesting. In a record from 1846 a Miss Rushout, an English visitor to Shetland, states among other things: 'Went with Mr. Playfair to Mr. Bain to see a collection of curiosities in a little museum peculiar to Shetland, saw the curious stone used as the axe by the Picts, and some little wooden ornaments cut by the natives of the Zetland, a variety of egg-stones *** white of magnesium very rare (...)'.¹⁷ Until the discovery of Bain's antiquarian museum it has been imagined that the first antiquarian collection in Shetland dated from the formation of the Shetland Literary and Scientific Society in 1861 (Brian Smith, pers. com.). However, Pløien's mentioning of Mr. Bain's collection indicates that such a collection was established at least as early as 1839, and possibly even earlier.¹⁸

In 1861 a further two Shetlanders became members of the Society, namely John Gatherer (1818–99) and Arthur Laurenson (1832–90).¹⁹ There is, however, no evidence that they ever provided Copenhagen with Shetland antiquities.

Among the objects, which Pløien, according to himself, delivered to Rafn, was the above-mentioned urn, which Mrs. Margaret Leisk had presented to him during his visit to Uyea. Furthermore, the delivery included a stone-axe ('Thunderbolt') and a Shetland-knife, both of unknown provenance presented by Bryden; a fragment of a stone-axe found on Mainland, presented by Charles Gilbert Duncan; 3 Shetland-knives, allegedly found together with another 11 on the island of Fetlar, presented by Charles Ogilvy (Appendix) (Illus. 58).

¹⁷ Shetland Archives D.5/1a/1.

¹⁸ William Bain appears in the 1841 Census of Lerwick. At this time he was c.25 years of age. In 1839 he is described as a merchant and fish-curer and ship agent in Lerwick. He was also an 'agent for Russia', which probably refers to some sort of consular office. References to him cease abruptly in the mid-1840s, which might mean that he left Shetland (Brian Smith and Tommy Watt, pers. com.).

¹⁹ Letter from Rafn to Messrs. John Gatherer and Arthur Laurenson, secretaries, Shetland Literary and Scientific Society, 8 June 1861, accepting life-membership of the Society. Shetland Archives (D.5/1a/1).

The Copenhagen collection of Shetland antiquities

The transfer of antiquities from Shetland to Copenhagen which Pøyen orchestrated shortly after his return in 1839 were to be followed by others. Thus, in 1873–4, a number of Shetland antiquities reached Copenhagen, presented by Joseph Anderson (1832–1916), president of the archaeological society in Edinburgh (see Appendix).

The fine collections of Shetland archaeological objects, which Pøyen through his efforts procured for the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, followed by later donations, are preserved intact today in the National Museum of Denmark (Illus. 59). They now represent material and substantial evidence of strong antiquarian links between Shetland and Denmark, established more than a hundred and fifty years ago.

Pøyen as an antiquarian

When this author recently re-read Pøyen's book about his journey in 1839 it struck him how much archaeology it actually contains. Pøyen's interest in matters antiquarian, as expressed in his book, demonstrates to a high degree the instrumental role he played in procuring members and antiquities for the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries and the Museum of Antiquities in Copenhagen during the mid-nineteenth century, thereby fulfilling Rafn's ambitions (Illus. 60). Although he never published anything on matters antiquarian, Pøyen was, indeed, a prominent and instrumental player in the contemporary antiquarian environment of Scandinavia and the aspirations of the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries.

Pøyen never saw Shetland again. His relationship with his Shetland friends seems to have faded quite quickly. He did, however, maintain communication with Cameron Mouat until at least 1855.²⁰

²⁰ A letter from Pøyen to Cameron Mouat, dated 16 August 1849, and a letter of 30 April 1855 from Cameron Mouat to Pøyen, are on record in the Gardie House Archive (1849/52 and 1855/148). Pøyen in his letter to Cameron Mouat wrote: "You are the only man on Zetland who does not intirely (*sic*) blot me out of his memory, the connecting link between those islands & myself & I scarcely need *** you how very grateful I feel towards you on that account".

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Shetland Archives, Shetland Museum, National Museum of Denmark and the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries, who kindly put their records and knowledge at my disposal. Furthermore, I also owe my thanks to John and Wendy Scott of Gardie, Bressay, who kindly allowed me access to the Gardie House Archive.

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Appendix

The list contains the objects stored in the so-called 'Foreign Prehistoric Collection' of the National Museum of Denmark. It has not been possible to trace the urn which Mrs. Leisk presented to PloÏyen during his visit in Uyea, and which he allegedly sent to the Society in Copenhagen.

- 7394 (1) A rounded axe with a broad edge and pointed neck, 10 I[nches] l[ong]; it seems to have been made of a sort of Serpentine. Found in Mainland Shetland. (1843) (Illus. 56).
- 5981 (2) 1. 9 I. l. stone-axe of a blackish stone, rounded on the one side, flat on the other somewhat pointed. (Shetland Islands).

- 5982 (3) 1. 7 I. l. stone-axe (of a blackish stone) pointed in one end, of a lighter stone do. (Shetland Islands).
- 9295 (4) A c. 8 I. l. stone-axe of a blackish stone pointed in one end (in Shetland called Thunderbolt). (Shetland Islands).
- 5983 (9) 1. 5 I. l. Stone-axe rounded on one side, flat on the other, and with a pointed neck (Shetland Islands).
- 5984 (10) 1. 4½ I. l. stone-axe (of a *soil-like* stone), somewhat flatter. (Shetland Islands).
- 5985 (19) One of the so-called “Steinbarter”, black, rather thick and oval, 9 I[inches] l[ong] and 5 I[inches] wide; has on one side an edge; seems to have been framed by wood. (Shetland Islands).
- 5986 (20) A smaller *ditto* of the so-called “Steinbarter”, 5 I. long, 3 I. wide. The edge had been damaged, but was repaired.
- 5987 (21) Fragments of Steinbarts. Traces of Asbestos from Shetland.
- 5297 (22) 3 flat knives of metasilt stone of an unusual sort, which hitherto is only known from the Shetland Isles. Very thin as a slate but completely smoothly polished especially towards the edge on the one side. 7 I[inches] l[ong], 5 I. b[road]—6 I. l, 4½ I. b.—5 I. l, 4¾ I. b. They are referred to as Pict-knives and have been found together with 11 similar ones on the island of Fetlar, and have been presented by Charl. Ogilvy, Esq. of Lerwick, Danish Vice-Consul in Lerwick (see Illus. 58).
- 5298 (23) Fragment of a *ditto* of a beautiful smooth stone of similar shape, but not of the same width. Unknown provenance.
- (24) 1 c. 6 I. l, 3 ½ I, wide *ditto*.
- 7395 (4) A 5½ [inches] l[ong] ¾ [inches] wide piece of bone with incised concentric circles, possibly a Connecting plate for a comb—Shetland Islands (Illus. 57).

Financial year 1873–74

- 1873 (25) five rudely shaped stone-axes or axe-blades; c. 9–11 [inches] l[ong]
- (26) *ditto ditto* with a broken edge and pointed neck; c. 8 to 9 [inches] long.
- (27) *ditto ditto*. with a partly polished edge, c. 8 ½ [inches] long.
- (28) Frag-ments [of] similar tools; c. 6 to 10 [inches] long. They all originate from the Shetland Islands and have been submitted to the Museum by Joseph Andersen (*sic*), President for the Archaeological Society in Edinburgh as a gift from Dr. Arthur Mitchell.

PART FOUR

PLACE-NAMES AND LANGUAGE

THE SCANDINAVIAN ELEMENT *GATA* OUTSIDE THE URBANISED SETTLEMENTS OF THE DANELAW

Gillian Fellows-Jensen

The Scandinavian element gata

The Scandinavian place-name element *gata* (f.) is undoubtedly most generally known as a street-name element in the urbanised settlements in the Danelaw, particularly in York and the Five Boroughs but also as far south as Peterborough, as well as in the medieval towns of Norwich and Great Yarmouth, and in the Norman foundation of King's Lynn. It also occurs in several parts of rural England, for example in the Isle of Ely, Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland, as well as across the northern Pennines in Cumbria. It has also left its mark on Lowland Scotland and the Isle of Man.

In street-names the element *gata* denotes 'a street (in a town)'. It is a typically Scandinavian element, although it is related to German *Gasse* (f.), which has the sense 'narrow street or alley'. Scandinavian *gata* is thought originally to have had a meaning such as 'opening, way out' and perhaps to be associated with Modern English *gate*, with which it is sometimes confused, but in Scandinavian sources from before c.1500 it is certainly recorded with the meaning 'a road, street or path', predominantly one that is bounded on either side by fences (e.g. a fenced path for cattle), by trees (e.g. a path cut through a forest), by buildings (e.g. a street in an urbanised settlement) or by human-beings (e.g. a path slashed through opposing forces). It must also, however, have had a more general sense of 'road' or 'highway'. It is certainly used to translate the Latin terms *via* 'way' and *semita* 'path or lane' (cf. the files of the *Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* in Copenhagen). Unfortunately, the word *gata* does not occur very frequently in early written sources either in Britain or in Scandinavia but it would seem that in Scandinavia *gata* was the word most frequently used for a street in urban areas in Denmark and southern Sweden, whereas the more commonly occurring elements in Norway are *almennig* and the loanword *stræti* from Latin *via strata* 'paved way'. The latter of these elements is of course also recorded in Anglo-Saxon England.

The earliest evidence for *gata* in street-names in England is found in the Danelaw, although even here the written records containing the word date from after the Viking period proper. It is simply the fact that so many of the names in *-gata* in York have specifics that are also Scandinavian that points to a Viking origin for the names and to York as the centre from which the names were disseminated (Fellows-Jensen 2004b, 363–66). In a recent study of the names in *-gata* I have noted that these names occur frequently in York and four of the Five Boroughs but less frequently in Derby, perhaps because the Danes had originally attacked Little Chester before subsequently settling in neighbouring Derby (Fellows-Jensen forthcoming, with reference to Hall 1989, 155–63). I have also noted the presence of many *gata*-names in Norwich. I have not made a systematic study of the element outside York and the towns mentioned above but I have noted that names in *-gata* also occur in many other urbanised areas in eastern England, for example Beverley, Bridlington, Hedon and Hull in the East Riding of Yorkshire and Doncaster, Leeds, Otley, Pontefract, Ripon, Selby and Wakefield in the West Riding.

Analogical formations in -gata

Many of the names in *-gata* are probably to be explained as post-Viking names coined on analogy with the original formations in the Danish kingdom of York. It is certainly the case with some of the names in York itself. A plaque erected on the street in Davygate, for example, states that it was probably named after the Davy or David who was the son of John le Lardiner of York to whom the land had first been granted in 1137, while the name Deangate is known to have been given to a road constructed as late as 1903 to ease the traffic flow around York Minster.

Analogical *gata*-names are also represented across the northern Pennines. Here there are several street-names in *-gata* in towns such as Carlisle, Penrith, Appleby and Kendal. Not all of the specifics in these names are of Viking origin but there is other evidence for Scandinavian influence on the language in the area. Particularly significant is the fact that the specifics of two of the *gata*-names in Carlisle, Botchergate and Rickergate, contain the same personal names as those which occur in two settlement names in *-by* in the city, namely Botcherby and Rickerby. These names must reflect the capture of the city by William Rufus in

1092 and his plantation there of peasant settlers. Together with several other personal names of Norman or Breton origin compounded with *-bý* in the neighbourhood of Carlisle, the Continental Germanic names *Bochard* and *Richard* reflect an intensification of settlement here after the Norman Conquest and the place-names and street-names they contain must be examples of analogical naming on the model of names familiar from the Danelaw (Fellows-Jensen 1985, 21–24).

It certainly seems likely that several of the street-names in *-gata* in Yorkshire other than in York itself are analogical formations ultimately modelled on the names in York. This is the case for example in some towns where there is documentary evidence going back, if not to Viking times, at least to the medieval period, for there exists a core of street-names that must have arisen when the word *gata* was in general use and when the Scandinavian word *kyrkja* was the normal Yorkshire word for ‘church’. There are examples in Wakefield, where a Kirkgate dates back to 1298 (*PNIW* 2, 164), and Leeds, where there was a Kirkgate in 1320 (*PNIW* 4, 126), even though the Wakefield street-name probably originated as a **kjarr-gata* ‘road to the marsh’ to judge from the earliest record in the form *Kergate* 1275, an exact parallel of *Cargate*, earlier *Kergathe*, now King Street in York. In some of the Yorkshire towns of more recent growth, however, there are no really ancient street-names and George Redmonds has recently argued convincingly that the name Kirkgate in Huddersfield must simply be a late transferred name, also a kind of analogical name one might say, for it was first recorded in about 1800, after the dramatic expansion of the town during the industrial revolution, most probably following the fashion current in more ancient boroughs in the neighbourhood, for example Wakefield (Redmonds 2004b, 174).

Some of the many rural examples of names in *-gata* in the North Country would certainly seem to have developed from Scandinavian *gata* but in a secondary sense, referring to ‘a right of way for leading cattle to pasture’ and hence ‘right of pasturage’ and subsequently ‘an allotment of pasture’ (*PNCh* 5(1:i), 190). The term ‘sheep-gate’, as in the lost *Shepegates* 1537 (*PNIY* 323), has often caused confusion, since Scandinavian *gata* became a homonym of the English word *gate* meaning ‘an opening or gap’. Barbara Crawford’s cousin, Julian Hall, has told me of the mystification expressed by a legal gentleman studying some property deeds dealing with land somewhere in the Wolds who wondered why there should have been a need for so many sheep-gates.

The sense 'track or road' of the word *gata* is found in the name of a track running through the parish of Askwith in the West Riding of Yorkshire on its way between Blubberhouses and Otley. This is recorded as Psalter Gate, with its specific an obvious example of a folk-etymological reshaping of the term salter or salt-merchant (*PNYW* 5, 62). There is a reference to a part of this track in a charter dated 1190 × 1208 in the form *Saltgate* (*ETC* 1, no. 54). *Salt(er)gate* was presumably used as a regular route by salters, although in the charter the place-name would seem to refer to a plot of pasture land. Tracks referred to as Saltgate and Saltergate occur fairly frequently in the Danelaw, for example in Lincoln (*Saltergate* 1270–71; *PNLi* 1, 96) and Lockton in the North Riding of Yorkshire (*Saltergate* 1335; *PNYN* 91) and a lost *Saltaregate* 13th century in the West Riding (*PNYW* 7, 192), but outside the Danelaw, for example in Cheshire and Worcestershire, such tracks tend to be called Salt or Salter(s) Way or Street.

A West Riding name in *-gata* that can be assumed to have been of particular interest to Barbara Crawford is Harrogate (*Harwegate* 1332; *PNYW* 5, 108). Harrogate is now a borough and spa but its name originally meant 'the road to the cairn'. It is a purely Scandinavian compound, one of the few such place-names in England to have a heathen connotation.

The element gata in Lowland Scots

According to the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* the earliest evidence for the currency of the Scandinavian loanword *gata* in Lowland Scots is to be found in the names of streets in various towns. These occur frequently in documents and records dating from about 1220 onwards. The difficulty of finding early datings for the *gata*-names in Scotland, however, is exemplified in Stuart Harris's comprehensive work on *The Place Names of Edinburgh* (1996). Working through the over 650 pages I found only eight possible examples of early *gata*-names. Of these only The Cowgate (*Kowgate*, *Cowgate*, *Kougate*; e.g. 1392, 1444, 1478) and its alternative form *Welgate* 1486, have numerous references in early sources. The Cowgate ran along the floor of the ravine to the south of the borough, where numerous springs or wells supplied cows and the inhabitants of Edinburgh with water (Harris 1996, 197–98). Probably as old as The Cowgate was the street known as The Canongate. This occurs in many documents but in all the earlier forms it is recorded in

Latin as *vicus canonicorum*. The first record in Scots that I have noted was *Canongait* 1533 (Harris 1996, 150). Figgate is the name for a coastal strip of land that was probably used for pasture. It is recorded from 1466 onwards and it probably originated as a name for where cattle or sheep were grazed, namely Scandinavian *fé-gata* 'cattle grazing' (Harris 1996, 268–69). Three other Edinburgh names which may well be old are the Kirkgates in Currie, Leith and Liberton (Harris 1996, 374–75).

Another east coast city with some old names in *-gata* is Aberdeen. In his pioneering book *Aberdeen Street Names: Their History, Meaning, and Personal Associations* (Aberdeen, 1911) G. M. Fraser noted that names such as Castlegate, Cowgate and Gallowgate are to be found in most of the older burghs (p. 4). The first record of the name Castlegate in 1272 is apparently also the first record of the castle itself. By 1911 the street-name had been changed to Castle Street. Among the few names in *-gata* that survive in Aberdeen are Gallowgate, frequently referred to in old Latin sources as *Via Furcarum*, indicating that this was the way by which thieves were led to the scaffold, and Netherkirkgate 1276 and Upperkirkgate, while Fraser notes in 1911 that Aberdeen had had a Cowgate until quite recently, the name of the passage leading from Justice Street behind the Barracks towards Commerce Street. It took its name from the road along which the cattle were driven down to the grazing ground at Futti or Footdee (Fraser 1911, 10, 34–35, 70).

Of incidental interest to Barbara Crawford is the fact that the two main streets in St Andrews, North Street and South Street, are recorded in Scots as *Northgait* and *Southgait* respectively from the fifteenth century and in Latin using *vicus* from the twelfth century (Smart & Fraser 1995, 45, 54).

The element gata in the Isle of Man

Names containing *gata* are also found in the Isle of Man. A few of these names may be genuine Norse formations dating from the period when Norse was actually spoken on the Island in the period of Norse rule there. The most likely instance is the name Ragged in Patrick, which is first recorded in 1801 as *the Ragged* but has been explained convincingly enough as Norse **rák-gata* 'drove road' or **rak-gata* 'straight track', a close compound with the two elements in Germanic word order (*PNIM* 1, 155). Other examples of the same formation are recorded in the parishes of Andreas and Bride (*PNIM* 3, 46, 66 and 188). With the

lack of early records of these names, however, the possibility of later import from northern England suggests itself. The word *Gat* occurs quite frequently in Manx place-names and it has been explained by C. J. S. Marstrander as a Manx word possibly cognate with Gaelic *gead* meaning a 'small plot of arable land' (1932, 230) but R. L. Thomson has suggested to me that the Manx spellings *gat(t)* and *gha(a)it* may rather be late importations of the Scandinavian word *gata* from northern England, where *gata* had developed the sense 'right of pasturage' (Fellows-Jensen 2004a, 426). There is, in fact, no way of ascertaining when and from where the element *gata* came to Man but when compounded with a Manx element as in *Gatt etten* (*aittin* 'gorsey'), the name is obviously a Manx formation (*PNIM* 1, 261), while the Chapel *Gatt* is equally clearly a late English formation (*PNIM* 6, 200).

The element gata in Lancashire and Cheshire

There is some evidence for the use of the element *gata* in the Middle English form *gate* to denote a road or track through the countryside or perhaps land for grazing in Lancashire and Cheshire. In Lancashire, for example, there is a hamlet called Soutergate, originally denoting 'the cobblers' road' in Kirkby Ireleth parish (*PNLa* 221), a village called Galgate (*Gawgett* 1605) in Cockerham parish, perhaps originally denoting 'the Galloway road' and probably referring to cattle drovers from Galloway (*PNLa* 170), a place called Ridgate (*Rudegate* 1277) in Prescott parish, meaning 'the cleared road' (*PNLa* 108), and a parish called Padgate, which originated as a stretch on the Warrington to Bolton road for which I have no early records but which has been explained by David Mills (1976, 119) as containing an unrecorded Old English **patte* that Mattias Löfvenberg tentatively translates as 'mud, marsh', apparently on the basis of surnames occurring in Sussex and Somerset and the use of the English term *pat* of a small mass of some soft substance such as butter or a cow-pat (Löfvenberg 1942, 148). I have unfortunately not had access to systematic etymological surveys of street-names in Lancashire.

There are, on the other hand, a fair number of instances of *gata* in John Dodgson's multi-volume edition of *The Place-Names of Cheshire* (5(1.i), 190–91). Dodgson comments, however, that 'it is notable that [*gata*] appears as an element in street-names only in Macclesfield and Stockport, not in the other towns' (*PNCh* 5(2), 236). I thought it a little

strange not to find any street-names in *-gata* in Chester, for coins are known to have been struck at the Chester mint in the tenth and eleventh centuries by moneyers bearing names of Scandinavian origin and there was a parochial church in Bridge Street in Chester dedicated to St. Olave of Norway at least before 1119 (*PNCh* 5(2), 338–39). The old street-names recorded in the two later Cheshire towns are not numerous. Those noted in Macclesfield are: Chestergate (*Chastergate* 1272 × 1307 ‘the road to Chester’), Jordangate (*Jordanesgate* 1339; named after Jordan de Macclesfield, died 1356), Wallgate (*le Wallegate* 1336) ‘the road to the well’, and *Soutersgate* 1376 ‘the cobblers’ road’ (*PNCh* 1, 115–17), while those in Stockport are: Hillgate (*the Hilgate* 1423) ‘the hill road’, Millgate (*the Millgate* 1423) ‘the road to the mill’ (*PNCh* 1, 295–96).

Deansgate and other gata-names in Manchester

I should like to conclude my paper by discussing the comparatively few urban street-names in *-gata* that exist or are known to have existed in Manchester. It was many years ago that I first began to speculate about the origin of the name Deansgate. This impressive modern thoroughfare was familiar to me from fairly regular visits in my childhood to Kendal Milnes Department Store and the city office of the Halifax Building Society, as well as from later visits to the then two major tourist attractions in the street, Manchester Cathedral and the John Rylands Library, from 1972 part of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. It was after a school excursion to York in the early 1950s that I first began my ruminations about the street-name Deansgate. It was not that I had already then become a precocious aficionado of place-names but the frequency of occurrence of street-names in *-gata* in York had been enough to make me wonder whether there was any link between Deansgate and the names in York. Even after a scholarly lifetime spent working on place-names, however, I had still not solved the mystery of the name Deansgate. None of the books at my disposition had presented me with a satisfactory solution.

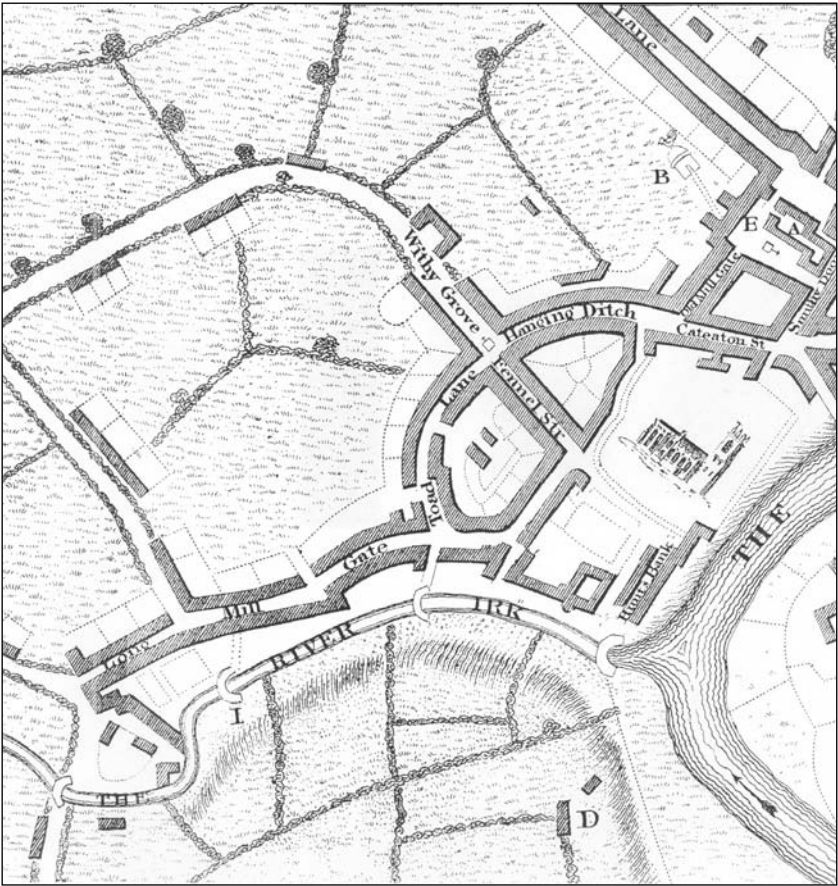
The first explanation of the name that I came across was in W. H. Thomson’s *History of Manchester to 1852* (1967), where the author writes, “This lane takes its name from the “Dene” or valley (which at that time ran sharply down the north side of what is now Hanging Ditch and Cateaton Street) and gate, i.e. the way, a name later transferred to the obstruction that barred the way. [John] Whitaker [*The*

History of Manchester (1771–75)] derived the name from the residence of a supposed Dean in Anglo-Saxon times but this is only one of his fanciful conjectures' (p. 34). I was not inclined, however, to believe that the specific of the name Deansgate was the Old English word *denu* meaning 'valley', for the normal genitive singular of this word is *dene* and in most of the English place-names actually containing *denu* as a specific the modern forms appear as Den-, for example Denham, Denton, Denford. The early forms of Deansgate that have recently been noted for me by Diana Winterbotham from the Tr(afford) deeds in the L(ancashire) R(ecord) O(ffice) are as follows: *le Denesgate* [1395] DDTr Box 21 no. 23, *le Denesgate* [1430] DDTr Box 21 no. 39 and no. 40, *le Deynesgate* [1498] DDTr Box 73 no. 67, *le Daynysgate* [1525] DDTr Box 73 no. 72, *Denisgate* [1568] DDTr Box 73 no. 74. I am convinced that the specific of Deansgate must be the Middle English common noun *den*, a loanword from Latin *decanus* 'the office of dean'. The dean in question cannot originally have been the dean of a cathedral, however. The church at the northern end of Deansgate was only a parish church and although it became a Collegiate Church with its own college of priests and a warden in 1421 and a Cathedral in 1847, the earliest form of the street-name antedates the promotion of the parish church to a status that might have been expected to require the services of a dean. There were deans there, however, in medieval times. Jordan the dean, who was fined for an offence against the forest laws in 1177, held Hulme of the manor of Salford in the twelfth century in thanage (VCH Lancaster, vol. IV, p. 192, n. 268 and p. 335), and a Geoffrey, Dean of Manchester, is one of a list of signatories to a charter of about c. 1200 (Farrer 1901, 42). According to Farrer it is not certain exactly what position was held by the deans in Manchester with respect to the parish church but that they may have been the chaplains in charge.

Modern Deansgate runs from slightly to the west of the Cathedral in a practically straight south-south-westerly line to a point a little to the east of the site of the old Roman fort, or to describe it from a more strategic point of view it runs from the crossing of the river Irk at Hunt's Bank (now under Victoria Station) to the crossing of the river Medlock at Knott Mill. Our earliest historical reference to Manchester in the Viking period is found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which records that King Edward the Elder ordered the *burh* there to be seized, repaired and manned against the Danes in 919. There is comparatively little archaeological evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement in Manchester. In his useful brief survey, however, Philip Holdsworth points out that it is

clear that Manchester was becoming of increasing importance in the tenth century (1983, 15). It would seem that there were two possibilities for the location of the *burh* re-fortified by Edward. This might have been the Roman fort but no Saxon objects have been found within the Roman defences, and the *burh* may rather have been at the site at the northern end of Deansgate, where the medieval town was growing up and where the line still evident in the course taken by Cateaton Street, Hanging Ditch, Toad Lane and Mill Gate may have formed part of the *burh* defences. It should be remembered, however, that Manchester did not seem to have experienced significant urbanisation after Edward's repairs and that it was rather to be compared with a small temporary *burh* than with an emergent town such as Chester (Griffiths 2001, 178). I would like to suggest, however, that the naming of Deansgate, apparently reflecting the legendary street-building of the Romans on its first straight stretch from the *burh* to the fort, must be seen to some degree as reflecting Danish influence on this burgeoning town, even though T. Swindells, writing of the period around 1825 in his book *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men* (1906, 18) says that 'Deansgate itself, a tortuous thoroughfare of varying width, was only eight yards wide at the corner of St. Mary's Gate; and many of the buildings were mean in the extreme'.

Among the early maps and plans of Manchester that have survived I have been able to locate street-names in *-gata* on three: first a small plan that has been inset in a map from 1746 and stated to be from about 1650, although the plan has been proved to be inaccurate and probably to have been compiled as late as about 1670 (Thomson 1967, 121). It contains only one *gata*-name, the so-called *Meal Gate*, which must be the street more correctly known as Mill Gate or Long Mill Gate. There would seem originally to have been two copies of this plan. The second was apparently re-drawn with the addition or correction of some names by the architect John Palmer in 1822 from an original in the possession of William Yates Esq. (printed in Higham 2004 as figure 64) Illus 61. The two early maps are entitled *A Plan of the Town of Manchester & Salford in the County Palatine of Lancaster by R. Casson & I. Berry* (probably 1746) and *A Topographical Plan of Manchester and Salford... by C. Laurent 1793* (both maps reproduced from plans in the Manchester Central Library, 1969). The harvest from these maps is as follows: *Deans Gate* 1746 and 1793 (now Deansgate), *Mill Gate* and *Old Mill Gate* 1746 and *Long Mill Gate* and *Old Mill Gate* 1793 (now Long Millgate), *St Mary Gate* 1746 and *St Marysgate* 1793 (also noted in



Illus. 61 An excerpt from a plan of Manchester supposedly made about 1650 and drawn from an original in the possession of William Yates Esq, by John Palmer, Architect, in 1822. The line still evident in the course taken by Cateaton Street, Hanging Ditch and Mill Gate may have formed part of the burgh defences. (Map reproduced with kind permission of Manchester Central Library).

a document from 1482 as *St. Mary Gate*; DDTr Box 73 no. 57) (now St Mary's Gate), and only in 1793 *Green Gate* (now Greengate), and *Bishop Gate* (now lost, off Great Bridgewater Street).

I have also come across an interesting document *An Act for widening and improving several Streets in the Town of Manchester* (Anno Regni Georgii Regis III. Cap. LXIII 1775; published London, 1776). The first schedule referred to in the Act deals with the opening and enlarging of 'the Street called *The Old Mill Gate*' along a line drawn from a point at the eastern end of the said street 'to a Street called *The Deansgate*' at a specified point, and the second schedule with the widening and improving of 'the Street on the southerly Side of the Exchange, between the Ends of *Market-street-lane* and *Saint Mary's Gate*'. In the Preamble to the Act it is stated that the said streets are very narrow and inconvenient, particularly on market days 'and it would tend greatly to the Advantage of Trade, and to the Convenience not only of the Inhabitants, but of the Publick, if the said Streets were widened and improved, and a new Street opened' (p. 1455). This very modern aim of the town fathers suggests that it was in the place where the town first began to grow in the medieval period that street-widening first became necessary. To judge from the maps from 1746 and 1793 the widening anticipated in the act of 1775 would in fact seem to have taken place.

These Manchester streets recorded in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century maps are all in or fairly close to what is to be assumed to have been the embryo medieval town and although they can hardly reflect direct Danish influence, they may reflect the influence of urban York, although Deans Gate and Green Gate may rather reflect the use of *gata* in its secondary sense in the names of major routeways, as does the existence of a *Saltersgate* by which route salt was brought to Manchester from Cheshire, now located at Burnage Lane/Slade Lane to the south-west of the city (Tait 1904, 94), and Moses Gate (NGR: SD 73 06), now a local name in Greater Manchester but which is recorded as early as in the reign of Henry VIII in connection with the transportation of turves for fuel 'through the town of *farneworth* and gate called *mossegate*' (The National Archives, Duchy of Lancaster 1/20/16). This name obviously originated as 'the road to the moss or peat-bog', probably to meet the need for turves for burning in the household or corn-drying kiln at Great Lever Hall close by.

It is perhaps worth noting that there have also been spellings of the street-name Deansgate in the course of time that suggest the workings of so-called folk-etymology. An indenture dated 1568 containing the

form *Denisgate* (DDTr Box 73, no. 74) seems likely to reflect the fact that at about the time when Henry V granted the church license to be refounded in 1421, the dedication of St. George and St. Denis was added to that of St. Mary in honour of that monarch. St. George had emerged as England's major patron saint by 1415, when Archbishop Chichele made his feast one of the principal events of the year after Henry's success at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, while St. Denis, as the patron of France, would have honoured Henry's victory in France and his marriage to the French king's daughter in 1420. Both George and Denis were moderately popular boys' names in England in the fifteenth century (Redmonds 2004a, 37, 91, 174).

Another so-called folk-etymological spelling of the name Deansgate is found in two documents. A lease of three burgages in the vill of Manchester, of which two lie in *Le Deynesgate* opposite the Rectory and one in *le Middelgate* (yet another old *gata*-name presumably meaning 'the street in the middle') next to *Todelone* was granted to the chaplain James Smith in 1498 (DDTr Box 73 no. 67), while another document refers to *Le Daynysgate* in 1525 (DDTr Box 73, no. 72). It might conceivably be thought that the specific has been confused with the Old English adjective *denisc* 'Danish', for there is a street-name in Lincoln called Danesgate which has been revived in the nineteenth century and which has forms such as *Dan(i)se(s)gate* 1180–90, 1226–28, 1331, *Daynesgate* 1224 (*PNLi* 1, 61) that are assumed to have as specific the adjective 'Danish'. Although the spellings *Daynes*- and *Deynesgate* of Deansgate may have been linked by some scribes with the adjective Danish, I find it unlikely that the many earlier instances of *Denesgate* are to be explained in this way. It is perhaps not surprising, however, that the link was sometimes made in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. It was known that there had been Danes in the area in the Viking period and even today there are clear traces of the Danes in a few of the major place-names in and around the town in the form of one or two hybrid names in *-tun* containing Scandinavian personal names, and at least five names in the element *holmr* taking the modern form *-hulme*.

Some Scandinavian settlement names in Manchester and its neighbourhood

I should therefore like to bring my paper to a conclusion with a few words about these names. Flixton (NGR: SJ 74 94) and Urmston (NGR: SJ 76 95) are both in Salford Hundred. The Domesday cover-

age of Lancashire is unfortunately very sparse and the comparatively late recording of the place-names is not to be treated as evidence of a late date for their coining. Flixton is recorded as *Flixton* in 1177 and the personal name it contains is probably Danish *Flik* (*PNLa* 37). Exactly the same name occurs three times in other areas of Danish settlement in England, namely once in the East Riding of Yorkshire and twice in Suffolk. Urmston is more difficult to explain. The oldest recorded form is *Wermeston* 1194 and later forms are *Urmeston* 1212 etc., *Wurmeston* 1219, *Ormeston* 1284 (*PNLa* 37). The forms with *W-* suggest that the earliest form was Old English *wyrm* 'worm, serpent', perhaps employed as a personal name, while the other forms point to cognate Scandinavian *ormr*, again perhaps used as a personal name (Fellows-Jensen 1985, 190; Insley 1987, 49). It is possible that the specific of an English **wyrrestun* was later confused with *Orm* and that the *Urm*-forms reflect a variant form. As pointed out by Ekwall, there are several instances in Anglo-Saxon charters of signatures in the form *Urm*. I am, however, emboldened to suggest that *Urm* might simply be a dialectal variant by earlier work I have done on the forms in -hulme of place-names containing an original Scandinavian *holmr* with the meanings 'island, land almost surrounded by water, water-meadow' (Fellows-Jensen 1985, 135–6, 313–14). It was originally because of the Hulme-names that it was thought that there must have been a Danish enclave near Manchester, since these spellings had been explained as archaic Danish forms not showing *a*-mutation. I have, however, pointed out that the *hulm*-spellings are mainly found in Salford Hundred in Lancashire and in Cheshire and not in the Danelaw where specifically Danish forms might have been expected and that the most satisfactory explanation of the forms is that they reflect a dialectal development of Old English and Old Scandinavian *o* before the consonant group *lm*. Several of the names in question do in fact have isolated spellings in *holm* that significantly reflect the normal Scandinavian spelling. I should now like to add that the *Urm*-spellings of Urmston perhaps show a similar dialectal development of *o* before the consonant group *rm*.

In the Manchester area we find the following examples of names in -hulme (forms taken from *PNLa* 30–33; *PNCh* 1, 247), Davyhulme (NGR: SJ 75 95; *Hulme* 1276), Hulme in Manchester (NGR: SJ 83 96; *Overholm* and *Noranhholm* 1226 with *Noran* perhaps reflecting Danish *nørre* 'northern', *Overhulm* and *Netherhulm* 1324), Hulme Hall in Reddish (NGR: SJ 89 93; *Hulme* 1343), Levenshulme (NGR: SJ 87 94; *Lewyneshulm* 1246, containing the Old English personal name *Leofwine*) and Cheadle Hulme

(NGR: SJ 87 85; *Hulm* 1212). The senses 'land almost surrounded by water' or 'island of high ground in a marshy area' would have applied well to all their sites, while the variation between *u* and *o* in the forms of the Manchester Hulme is an example of the variation discussed above. I would thus venture to say in conclusion that Deansgate and the other *gata*-names in Manchester combine with this small group of Danish settlement names in and around the town to mark a Danish contribution to the urbanisation of the area.

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AN OGHAM-INSCRIBED PLAQUE FROM BORNAIS, SOUTH UIST

Katherine Forsyth

The Site

The ogham-inscribed plaque was discovered in 1996 during excavation of a large and complex multi-period settlement site at Bornais on the machair plain of South Uist (NGR NF 729 302). The excavations were part of a decade-long investigation by archaeologists from the Universities of Cardiff and Sheffield under Niall Sharples,¹ 1994–2004. Interim reports document a continuous sequence of occupation that includes Middle Iron Age, Late Iron Age I and II, Viking and Norse settlement, and came to an end only in the early fifteenth century (Sharples 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2003).

The earliest phases at Bornais are represented by the remains of a Middle Iron Age wheel-house within ‘Mound 1’. This was overlaid by an extensive and artefactually rich industrial occupation of the fourth to fifth centuries AD which was in turn replaced by a complex of buildings dating to the immediately pre-Viking period, but possibly used or modified in the Viking period. These Mound 1 structures were infilled in the Viking period and the main focus of settlement shifted within the site (Sharples 1997). The sequence of houses on ‘Mound 2’ indicates a Viking settlement which had become, by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a large and prosperous community. The rich assemblage of finds led the excavator to conclude that Bornais was ‘the home of a high-status family who probably originated in Scandinavia but who eventually adopted Hebridean traditions. This family have connexions which span the Atlantic seaboard throughout the four centuries of Norse occupation’ (Sharples 2004, 270–1). Among these finds were items from Scandinavia, Shetland, Ireland and south-west England indicating to

¹ I am most grateful to Niall Sharples for inviting me to examine the ogham, for providing me with off-prints relating to Bornais, and for encouraging me to publish this account in advance of his final report on the excavations.

Sharples that Bornais was in a trading relationship with the urban centres of the Irish Sea by the twelfth century AD. The commodity traded was probably herring (Sharples 2000). Certainly, Bornais is situated close to the only good harbour on the west coast of South Uist. That this harbour is overlooked by the Iron Age broch site of Dun Vulcan (NF 7140 2981) underlines the area's strategic importance in the first millennium AD (Parker Pearson and Sharples 1999).

The dating bracket for the ogham indicated by its palaeography (see below) straddles the Late Iron Age (Pictish)/Viking horizon and it is a cause of no little frustration that the object was found in an unstratified context. It was recovered during surface collection on a 'heavily rabbit-bited' area of Mound 1 which was devoid of turf cover. It was found along with 'large quantities of bone and pot' and other midden material including 'considerable quantities of slag' which suggested 'a specific high-temperature process of some sort', although not metalworking (Sharples 1997). Thus the bone may have been dumped as midden material at any point in the Viking period, or brought to the surface by burrowing from earlier occupation levels. Sadly, then, the archaeological context can do little to refine the dating or cultural context of the object.

The Inscription

The inscribed object is part of a small plaque carefully formed from a sliver of bone (possibly bovine metapodial) (Illus. 62). It is 44 mm in length, 2 mm thick, and tapers from 11 mm to 8 mm wide. It is fractured at both ends. The extant section comprises three fragments which fit together exactly. The inscription clearly continued, at least at the wide end, and originally the object may have been considerably longer than it is now.

The ogham inscription has been incised with a sharp blade on the smooth outer surface of the bone. It utilizes the full width of the plaque's surface. The letters have been precisely and accurately cut: component strokes are evenly spaced and neatly parallel. To do so on such a minute scale reflects skill and attention, particularly in the case of the five-stroke 'angled vowel' which is tiny. The deeply cut stem-line runs the entire length of the plaque, slightly closer to one long edge than the other. It appears to have been drawn free-hand rather than ruled. Five complete characters and part of a sixth are arranged relative to this line. Each is distinct in form and clearly spaced from the others: there is no ambiguity about the composition of each character.

The stem-line continues right to the broken ends of the plaque. At the wider, fractured, end there is a trace of an oblique stroke below the stem. Only the distal tip is visible (i.e. the portion furthest from the stem-line), the rest has been lost beyond the break. This is either the tip of a 'b'-consonant stroke (i.e. the first stroke of a letter from the group: $\mathfrak{B}\mathfrak{T}$, $\mathfrak{L}\mathfrak{T}$, $\mathfrak{F}\mathfrak{T}$, $\mathfrak{s}\mathfrak{T}$, or $\mathfrak{N}\mathfrak{T}$), or, since the relevant portion of the opposite side is missing, the lower distal tip of an m-consonant ($\mathfrak{M}\mathfrak{+}$, $\mathfrak{G}\mathfrak{#}$, $\mathfrak{G}^{\mathfrak{w}}\mathfrak{#}$, $\mathfrak{s}^{\mathfrak{r}}\mathfrak{#}$, or $\mathfrak{R}\mathfrak{#}$). At the narrower end there is a blank space beyond the x-character. This gap is somewhat larger than might be expected between letters, and it is possible this is the opening letter of the inscription. However, ogham inscriptions typically start at or close to the beginning of the stem-line and an initial area of blank space before the first letter would be exceptional (cf. Lunnasting SHE,² which has the stem start at the intersection of the two strokes of the initial x, Forsyth 1996, 402–19). Having said that, there are occasional examples, both formal and informal, which have a long 'tail' of stem before the first character, cf. Birsay 1 ORK (Forsyth 1996, 76–81), and Bressay SHE (left edge) (Forsyth 1996, 117–38). The evidence is therefore ambiguous and it is not certain whether or not any lettering has been lost beyond the 'x' on Bornais.

Indications of the carving method are revealed in a few places. For instance, the second stroke of the angled vowel has a very light projection beyond the stem where an initial score has overshot the stem. The strokes of the N are deepest at the distal end and shallowest at the stem-line, and the first and last overshoot the stem a little with very light traces. The lower left-hand stroke of the x has been re-cut more deeply and slightly higher than the lighter initial stroke, to which it is parallel, perhaps because it was realised that the two oblique strokes would not intersect exactly on the line as required.

Reading the text

In order to obtain a reading, the first thing to establish is the correct orientation of the plaque, and thus at which end to begin. Oghams read from left to right, but, in the case of portable objects, there may

² The three letters following the names of Scottish ogham inscriptions indicate the pre-1975 county of origin (see abbreviations).

be doubt as to which way up the object should be held. Because of the nature of the ogham script inversion would affect, not only the order of the letters, but, in many cases, the actual identification of individual letters. In our case, the two symmetrical characters would be unaffected by a change in orientation:  and . The '>'-shaped 'angled vowel' would point in the opposite direction but the significance, if any, of this is unclear (see discussion below). The two other characters, however, would represent different letters depending on which way up they lie: the five-stroke letter is either  ('Q') or  ('N'), and the one-stroke letter, either  ('B') or  ('H').

The Bornais ogham offers two internal clues to the direction of reading: unfortunately these appear to be contradictory. The earliest ogham inscriptions, including all those in Ireland, have B- and H-consonant strokes—respectively, above and below the stem-line—which are perpendicular to the stem. There are, however, numerous later inscriptions from various parts of Scotland which feature B- and H-consonants which consistently lie at an oblique angle to it. In every instance where the direction of reading can be established, the slope of these consonants is consistently with the proximal end (i.e. the end closest to the stem) forward of the distal end, relative to the direction of reading (i.e. a B and H together would form an arrow pointing to the right: >) (Forsyth 1996, xlvī–xlvii). Applied to Bornais, this would mean beginning reading at the narrow end. However, the direction of the second character, the 'angled vowel', appears to contravene this indication. There are numerous examples of 'angled vowels' on later Scottish oghams, and in every instance the 'arrows' point in the direction of reading, where this can be established (Forsyth 1996, individual entries). The Bornais example is the only one to have an angled vowel pointing 'against' the direction of its sloping consonant strokes. The direction of reading remains, therefore, unresolved.

Over and above this is a further difficulty: it so happens that the precise orthographic value of three of the five complete characters in the Bornais inscription is ambiguous or unknown (see discussion below). In the following transliteration, these ambiguous characters are given their conventional value, enclosed with ' ' to indicate uncertainty.

Beginning at the wider end the ogham reads as follows:

- 1 Incomplete letter. *Either*: The distal tip of an H-consonant stroke: H or any subsequent letter of the H-group (D, T, C, Q). *Or, if inverted*: The distal tip of a B-consonant stroke: B or any subsequent letter of the

B-group (L,F,S,N). *Alternatively*: it is possible that the stroke continued across the stem into the portion now lost, in which case it would be an M, or any subsequent letter of the M-group (G, G^w, S^r, R).

- 2 Four straight vowel strokes (E).
- 3 *Either*: Five H-group strokes: (Q), *or, if inverted*, five B-group strokes (N).
- 4 *Either*: One B-group stroke: (B), *or, if inverted*, one H-group strokes (H).
- 5 Five angled vowel strokes (‘I’).
- 6 ‘X’

This gives a reading³ of [H⁺/M⁺] E Q B ‘I’ ‘X’

Read from the opposite end, this would be ‘X’ ‘I’ H N E [B⁺/M⁺]

The inscription may or may not have continued beyond/before the ‘X’.

Transliteration of ‘X’

The character x was the first of the ‘supplementary letters’, or *forfeda*, added to the original inventory of twenty ogham characters. It is the only *forfid* to appear regularly on ‘classic’ Irish ogham pillars of the pre-seventh century. The original value of this character was /k/ or /χ/, and it appears with this value on over a dozen ‘orthodox’ Irish pillars (McManus 1991, 79). Subsequently, however, this character came to be used to represent Primitive Irish /eā/ and its reflexes é /ɛ:/ and the later diphthong éo. Eventually it became equated with the Middle Irish manuscript digraph *ea* (Sims-Williams 1992, 51–56). There are about half a dozen examples among the Scottish ogham corpus. Although there are problems with interpreting most of these texts, it does appear that the x character is being consistently used to represent a vowel sound, though the example on Newton ABD could be either a consonant (/χ/ or /k/) or a vowel (Forsyth 1996, 432).

Transliteration of ‘H’ (Forsyth 1997, xxxix; Sims-Williams 1993, 162–170)

The original sound value of this character is not known as it does not appear in Irish ogham inscriptions of the pre-seventh century (see McManus 1991, 37). In Irish manuscripts of the ninth century and

³ ‘H⁺’ indicates, ‘H, or any subsequent member of the H-group’, similarly with M⁺, etc. Alternative readings are separated by ‘/’.

later, when ogham was used as a cypher for contemporary manuscript spelling, the symbol was equated with *h* and used with C and T as equivalents of the manuscript digraphs *ch* /χ/ and *th* /θ/. It is, however, never used in this way in Scottish inscriptions. Instead it tends to occur between a vowel and T or R, e.g. EHT, AHT, AHR. This suggests the value was a spirant, perhaps perpetuating an older convention *h* = /χ/ seen, for example, on a roman alphabet inscription from Wales (CIIC 349, 401) BROHO- for /broχo-/. The Bornais H follows a vowel (‘i’) and precedes N. It therefore follows the pattern seen elsewhere in Scotland, which may indicate it is a spirant. Of course, read in the other direction, this character is not an H at all, but a B.

Transliteration of angled vowel (Forsyth 1997, 275)

This is the name given to short strokes across the stem which are angled at their mid-point to form a herringbone pattern. They do not occur in inscriptions outside Scotland although they do appear in two later Irish manuscripts. There is an unambiguous example of an angled vowel in practical use in a clear but undeciphered text in the margin of a page bound into the 14th century Book of Fermoy (RIA MS 23 e 29, f.5v; Royal Irish Academy 1926–1970, p. 3097). The other example is more dubious. It appears among the exemplary—and fantastical—alphabets in *In Lebor Ogaim* (‘The Book of Ogham’) in the late 14th-century Book of Ballymote). In Scotland there are eleven inscriptions from nine sites featuring angled vowels: Birsay 1 and 3 ORK, Bressay SHE, Brodie MOR, Burrian ORK, Cunningsburgh 1 and 3 SHE, Dyce ABD, Formaston ABD, Golspie SUT, Latheron CAI, Lunnasting SHE (see Forsyth 1996 for references to individual stones, except Dyce which is unpublished). In each case angled vowels appear alongside ‘straight’ vowels. This implies that the distinction carried orthographic significance although the precise nature of the distinction is not clear. One possibility might be that it is meant to indicate vowel length, but this is conjecture. The letters A, E, O are already well attested within this group of inscriptions, Bornais supplies the first example of ‘angled’ I. As stated above, all the other examples of inscriptions containing angled vowels have them pointing in the same direction as the sloping B- and H-consonants. The breaking of this convention at Bornais is puzzling.

Interpreting the text

It is clear that there are compound difficulties in reading this text. Yet even if there were no doubt over the identity and orthographic value of any of the characters, the incompleteness and brevity of the extant text make it unlikely that a satisfactory interpretation could be achieved. At a mere six characters, Bornais is among the shortest of the extant oghams from Scotland. It could be complete as it stands: the apparently complete ogham graffiti Blackwaterfoot 2, Arran, consists of only six letters. If, however, the Bornais sequence is only a segment of a longer text, it is perhaps unlikely that chance would result in the extant portion consisting of a complete word and instead it may well incorporate a word boundary. A further uncertainty concerns the language of the inscription. Ogham was invented in an Irish- (i.e. Gaelic-) language context and spread to Gaelic-speaking settlements in Wales, Man and Dumnonia. It underwent more widespread adoption in Scotland including areas which would have been predominantly Pictish-speaking. Indeed there is some indication that the ogham alphabet was adapted to represent the sounds of Pictish (Burrian ORK, Forsyth 1996, 202).

A third linguistic possibility is Norse. As discussed below, the Bornais ogham exhibits features which link it to a number of late Scottish oghams, including the tenth-century cross-slab from Bressay SHE, which incorporates a method of word-division possibly derived from runic epigraphy. That ogham continued to be used in Shetland after the Norse settlement is further demonstrated by the ogham-inscribed cross-slab fragment from Whiteness SHE which probably dates to the tenth-century. Three ogham-inscribed fragments have been recovered from Cunningsburgh SHE, a site of importance in both the pre-Viking and Viking periods, but these are undated, as are the three ogham-inscribed stones from Birsay ORK, another site of importance both before and after the arrival of the Norse in the region. More unequivocal evidence of Norse interest in ogham is provided by three stones which exhibit both scripts together. The remarkable 'Mal-Lumkin' cross-slab from Kirk Michael, Isle of Man, well exemplifies the mixed ethnic, cultural and linguistic environment of the island in the Viking Age. It is a high-status Christian monument erected by a man with a Gaelic name to his Gaelic-named foster-mother, who was the daughter of a man with a Gaelic name and the wife of a man with a Norse name. The main inscription is in Norse and written in runes but it is accompanied by an ogham alphabet and a further illegible ogham inscription (Kermode

1907, 195–99, No.104). Also from Man is a small, plain stone from Maughold which bears both a runic and ogham alphabet and the Norse-language declaration in runes that ‘John the Priest cut these runes’ (Kermode 1907, 213–14, No. 115). A similarly mixed Gaelic-Norse environment is indicated by the inscribed cross-shaft from Killaloe, Co. Clare (Macalister 1945, 58–9 = CIIC 54; Barnes, Hagland, and Page 1997, Appendix: IR 2). It bears a runic memorial in Norse to a man with a Norse name, accompanied by a Gaelic-language memorial to the same man written in ogham, and dates to perhaps the second half of the eleventh century. To these lapidary examples may be added an unpublished ogham-inscribed bone comb of late pre-Norman date found during excavations Dublin Castle in 1961–2 (pers. com. Ann Lynch, OPW 1994) which may be put alongside a bone comb with runic *futhark* from the same site (Barnes, Hagland, and Page 1997, Appendix: IR 14). Given this evidence for Norse knowledge of and interest in ogham, and in the absence of archaeological evidence to the contrary, a date in the Norse period for the Bornais ogham plaque remains a distinct possibility.

Uncertainties of reading and language may make it unlikely that the Bornais ogham text can be interpreted satisfactorily. Nonetheless a few observations, however limited, are in order. The reading ‘x’ ‘r’ ‘h’ N E [B⁺/M⁺] could have represented something like *éihne*[-] or *éixne*[-], or indeed *kixne*[-]. None of these is readily interpreted. Reading in the opposite direction, [H⁺/M⁺] E Q B ‘r’ ‘x’ could have stood for something like [-]eqbié or [-]eqbiχ or [-]eqbik. If the incomplete character was M (and there are nine other possibilities!), then we would have the sequence *meqbie* or *meqbiχ* or *meqbik* which are a little more promising. The Primitive Irish word MAQQI (‘of the son’) is ubiquitous in early Irish ogham inscriptions in the formula X MAQQI Y (‘of X, son of Y’). It seems to occur on a number of Scottish ogham inscriptions in the form MAQQ (e.g. Latheron CAL, Altyre MOR), which appears to be an unhistorical spelling (we might instead have expected MAC(C)). The retention of Q in preference to C may have been influenced by the traditional ogham orthography of this formula word. More commonly, however, in Scotland we have the sequence MEQ(Q) between what may be personal names.⁴ Again this appears to be an unhistorical spelling,

⁴ Bressay BENISEMEQDDROANN[-; St Ninian’s Isle [B+]ESMEQQNANNAMMOVVES[†]; Blackwaterfoot 1 -]MEQ[-

the Q(Q) influenced by traditional ogham orthography, but the E more closely reflecting the contemporary pronunciation of the genitive case *meic*. Brodie MOR may contain the sequence –]MECC[– but the inscription is so damaged as to be almost illegible.

It is possible, therefore, that the Bornais inscription incorporates the Gaelic word for ‘son’ in the genitive case. If so, the following letters would be expected to form a personal name in the genitive case. The first two options *Bié* or *Biχ* are not promising, but BIK might do for what in manuscript spelling would be *Bicc*, the genitive form of the well-attested Irish male personal name *Becc* (O’Brien 1976, 517). This could be complete as it stands, or, if the inscription continued, the first part of a longer name such as a compound name of the form adjective + noun with *Becc* (literally ‘small’) as first element, see discussion of the name *Becli* inscribed on a newly discovered cross-slab from Dull, Perthshire (Will *et al.* 2005, 65–66). If not a genitive, it is possible that the sequence BIX, for /bik/, could be the beginning of a name such as *Bicliu* (*ibid.*)

If the incomplete character is indeed an M and the above interpretation is accepted then the Bornais inscription could be part of a longer text referring to ‘[X] son of *Becc*’, or refer as it stands to a man known as *Mac-Bicc*. Although this name is not itself attested, compound names of the form *Mac-X* (c.f. *Mac-bethad*) are well-known from Medieval Gaelic sources. The complete ogham inscription on the knife-handle from Bac Mhic Connain, North Uist, reads MAQUNTEN(A)COT. It must be stressed, however, that the above discussion remains highly speculative due to the uncertainties of reading.

Script

The study of ogham palaeography is in its infancy (for a first attempt, see Forsyth 1996, xli–xlviii) and is hampered by a lack of datable examples. Nonetheless a few observations may be made regarding the style of ogham script used at Bornais. The ordinary vowel strokes of the second letter are longer than the short notches typical of the earliest Irish oghams. Generally speaking, the length of vowel strokes appears to have increased over time (Forsyth 1996, xlv–xlv), however, this process must have started quite early as vowel-strokes similar in length to those of Bornais are found already on the ogham from Pool ORK which was found in a context dated by radiocarbon to the sixth century (Forsyth 1996,

457). The lengthening of vowel strokes reduces the visual distinction between vowels and consonants and therefore increases the difficulty of reading an ogham at a glance. In Scotland, where vowel-stroke lengthening is most common, the problem is alleviated by a compensatory innovation: the introduction of slope to the 'short' consonants of the B- and H- groups which were originally perpendicular to the stem-line and continued to be so in Ireland (Forsyth 1996, xlv–xlvi, see discussion above). The feature is not present on Scottish oghams likely to be early (sixth/seventh centuries),⁵ but appears to become increasingly common over time until it is standard in all the latest inscriptions. Although there are occasional examples of early Irish and Welsh oghams with slightly sloping 'short' consonants these appear to be isolated examples (Forsyth 1996, xliii). Certainly the feature is not as marked and does not appear to be at all systematised outside Scotland. There are very few Irish oghams comparable in date to the later Scottish ones (8th–10th centuries). Nonetheless, the fact that, as far as I am aware, there are no post-seventh century Irish examples, either epigraphic or manuscript, of sloping 'short' consonants suggests that it should be considered a distinctively Scottish feature. Its presence at Bornais may, therefore, have cultural as well as dating implications.

Another general tendency in ogham palaeography is for the spacing between letters to increase over time, and this is true in Ireland, Scotland and Man (Forsyth 1996, xlv). In the earliest inscriptions all strokes tend to be equally spaced, regardless of whether the space is within or between letters. In the later ones a distinct gap is left between individual letters. Obviously, this emphatic spacing enhances legibility. The spacing between the letters on Bornais is greater than the spacing between component strokes but only modestly so (as far as can be determined from such a short sequence). This would tend to confirm the impression that the script of Bornais is not from the earliest phases of ogham.

The use of the 'x'-*forfid* is not indicative of date as it is found already on classic Irish ogham pillars of the fifth and sixth centuries (see above). The other 'supplementary' character on the Bornais plaque, however, does have dating implications. As with the sloping 'short' consonants, 'angled vowels' are widespread in the Scottish ogham corpus including a high proportion of later monuments such as cross-slabs, some of

⁵ Note: It is not found at Pool.

which may date as late as the tenth-century.⁶ Both features are found alongside other developed forms of the script, such as bind-letters, ‘hammer-head’ A, and other more unusual supplementary letters. None of these palaeographically ‘later’ forms is found on stones which for other reasons would be considered early, such as the pillars (Gigha ARG, Auqhollie KCD) or symbol stones (Ackergill CAI). As noted above, the distribution of angled vowels is widespread as they have been found in inscriptions from the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland, from Caithness, Moray and Aberdeenshire. The Bornais inscription extends this distribution to include the Western Isles. It is also the first non-lapidary example which is significant as it adds further weight to the contention that angled vowels are not simply a calligraphic variant of a normal vowel character appropriate for formal monumental inscriptions, but are indeed more likely to have had orthographic import.

To summarize: none of the non-standard features exhibited by the Bornais ogham—spacing, slope, and angled vowel—can provide a precise date, but taken together they imply that Bornais should not be bracketed with the earliest Scottish ogham but is more likely to date to the eighth-tenth century, or later. The slope of the ‘short’ consonant characters and, especially, the angled vowel, tie Bornais into the Scottish ogham tradition specifically.

Function

Although the great majority of surviving ogham inscriptions are on formal stone monuments, there is also a small but diverse corpus of portable objects inscribed with ogham. These include cetacean bone knife-handles from Bac Mhic Connain, North Uist, and Gurness ORK, and a red deer antler knife-handle from Weeting, Norfolk (Clarke 1952). The Bornais plaque is far too thin to have been a handle unless it was inlaid into a larger setting. Its lack of wear, however, argues against its having been incorporated in an everyday object such as a knife handle or comb. It could, perhaps, have been a decorative inlay in, say, a box. There are no signs of rivet holes or other means of attachment,

⁶ Slope only: Buckquoy ORK, Cunningsburgh 2 SHE, Logie Elphinstone ABD, St Ninian’s Isle SHE, Whiteness SHE. Slope and angled vowels: Birsay 1 and 2 ORK, Bressay SHE, Brodie MOR, Burrian ORK, Cunningsburgh 3 SHE, Dyce ABD, Formaston ABD, Golspie SUT, Inchyra PER, Latheron CAI, Lunnasting SHE.

although the extant portion may be only a small section of the original. The tapering shape requires explanation.

Perhaps the object was a peg of some sort. In the Medieval Irish tale concerning the *Macgnímrada* ('Boyhood deeds') of Cú Chulainn, the hero reads a message inscribed in ogham on the peg (*menoc*) which fastens an iron ring or withe hanging round a pillar-stone (O'Rahilly 1976, 1068, and O'Rahilly 1976, 710, discussed, McManus 1991, 156). Elsewhere in the *Táin* the adult Cú Chulainn writes a message in ogham on the peg of a twisted withe which he casts over the top of a pillar-stone for his enemies to find (O'Rahilly 1976, 220, discussed, McManus 1991, 157). It is unclear, however, whether such literary descriptions of the use of ogham constitute evidence for actual practice, or are merely a creative back-projection of the kind of literary activity imagined by the saga authors for the legendary pre-Christian past (McManus 1991, 156–63).

If not a peg, perhaps the Bornais plaque was a counter in a game or a betting token, or perhaps a lot. Similar explanations have been adduced for objects such as the Pictish-symbol-inscribed ox phalanges from the Broch of Burrian ORK, discovered during the same excavations which produced the ogham-inscribed cross-slab (McGregor 1974, 88, 102–3). There is a literary reference to the use of ogham-inscribed lots for divination in the Irish saga *Tochmarc Étaíne* (Windisch and Stokes 1880–1909, i 129 sct.19; see McManus 1991, 157). The druid Dallán cuts four rods of yew, writes ogham on them, and uses them to divine the whereabouts of the abducted heroine. However, as with the references to ogham-inscribed pegs above, it is not clear whether this is evidence for actual practice, or literary imagination.

The use of lots in legal proceedings is, however, well-attested in Medieval Irish legal texts (Kelly 1988, 208–9). Lot-casting (*crannchoir*) was used to determine guilt in the absence of witnesses especially in relation to the unwitnessed offences of domestic animals. It was also used in exceptional cases concerning the division of land between heirs. One text describes the casting of lots on water with the lot of the guilty party sinking (Windisch and Stokes, 1880–1909, iii 192.7–8). Another procedure for casting lots is described in detail in the early eighth century and later legal text *Cáin Adamnáin* (Meyer 1905, sect. 46, discussed by McManus 1991, 162). In order to establish guilt when several were suspected, the names of the suspects were written on leaves (*i ndulne*) and each leaf was arranged round a lot (*crand*). The lots were then put into a chalice on the altar, and the one whose lot fell

out was considered guilty. The script used is not specified, and there is no reason to think it was ogham rather than the roman alphabet, but this example shows the use of lots in a practical judicial context endorsed by the Church. Lot-casting was not simply a matter of pagan magic and neither is there any reason to associate the ogham script *per se* with magic, secrecy, or the occult, as McManus makes clear (1991, 163). Having said that, ogham could, like any other script, be used for cryptic or occult practices.

The Irish word for 'lot', *crann*, means, literally, 'piece of wood' (*DIL* s.v.), a semantic connection maintained in other branches of Celtic (c.f. Gaulish *prinni* 'lot', Lambert 2004, 112). Literary references to ogham on specially prepared objects—as opposed to pre-existing objects to hand (e.g. shield, small spear, tree branch)—consistently depict the carving of ogham on wooden rods (*flesc/flesca*), where the species, if specified, is usually yew. However, in an environment such as the Western Isles where wood was scarce, bone may have been equally acceptable. A complete sheep metacarpal incised with zig-zag ornament and two short ogham inscriptions was discovered in the excavation of the predominantly seventh-tenth century fortified enclosure of Cahercommaun in the Burren, Co. Clare (Hencken 1938, 66; Cotter 1999). The two oghams appear to be cryptic, involving as they do numerous unusual letter forms. If not doodles then they may indeed have had a magical purpose as Macalister suggests (Macalister 1945, 56–7 = CIIC 52, 'Tullycommon'). The odds are heavily stacked against the preservation of putative oghams on wood and bone. We are indeed fortunate to have even these examples from two environments—the soils of the limestone Burren and the machair sands of the Western Isles—which are unusually conducive to the preservation of organic material.

As discussed above, the Bornais ogham could date to the Viking Age, and therefore it is worth mentioning a possible parallel from the Norse world. In size and shape the Bornais plaque recalls the many rune-inscribed sticks from Bryggen in Bergen, Norway. About 670 examples, mostly of pine, but also of other woods and bone, were recovered during excavations of the medieval wharf from 1955–1979⁷. The sticks bear a great variety of texts, mostly quite short, though some are more lengthy. They range in date from the 12th to 14th century

⁷ A database of all the inscriptions is available at: <http://www.nb.no/baser/runer/eindex.html>

and encompass business letters and orders, personal messages of many kinds, including the affectionate and bawdy, and prayers or religious phrases of possibly amuletic import (Haaveldsen and Øre, n.d.). What is of particular interest to the Bornais case, however, is a category of tapering wooden slats, sometimes perforated and often coming to a sharp point.⁸ Many of these are inscribed with simple personal names or the formula 'NN owns me'. They appear to be merchants' labels meant to be tied onto or stuck into goods bought (Page 1987, 7, 8 illus.). Given the evidence for commercial activity at Bornais by the 12th century, it is tempting to see the tapering bone plaque as just such a label used for accounting or labelling the ownership of goods, inspired perhaps by knowledge of runic merchants' labels. In the absence of firm dating evidence, however, this must remain speculation.

Conclusions

The palaeography of the Bornais ogham suggests a date in the eighth–tenth century, or later: a range broadly confirmed by its archaeological context. Sadly, the evidence is currently lacking to refine this dating any further. Specifically, we cannot say if the inscription dates to before or after the Viking *adventus*. The possibility of a Norse context is tantalizing but remains no more than a possibility. Although the lettering is clear, there are too many uncertainties concerning the text for it to be read, much less interpreted, with confidence. Even the language in which it is written cannot be established with certainty. Nor do we know the function of the object although several explanations have been proposed, including a lot, a gaming piece, or a label.

Despite the fundamental questions which remain unresolved, the Bornais find provides some important additions to our knowledge of ogham. On the most basic level it further extends the geographical distribution of ogham in Scotland: it is the second example from the Western Isles and the first from South Uist. Like the other portable oghams from Scotland (Bac Mhic Connain, North Uist, Gurness ORK, Buckquoy ORK) it is from a secular settlement site and thus strengthens

⁸ See, for instance, the examples illustrated in the Bergen runic database at <http://www.nb.no/baser/runer/runebilder/b128.jpg> and [~/b122.jpg](http://www.nb.no/baser/runer/runebilder/b122.jpg). A selection of runic merchants' labels from Bryggen are conveniently illustrated by Page (1987, 7).

the impression that ogham literacy was not unusual among at least some sections of the general population. Certainly ogham was not a scholastic curio but was in use in Atlantic Scotland as a practical script.

The Bornais text comprises only five complete letters as it stands but nonetheless contributes some new palaeographical information. It contains the first example of a five-stroke angled vowel (ṭ). This character is also the first example of an angled vowel from a non-lapidary context. That this palaeographic innovation was shared over a wide geographical area within Scotland and across a variety of monument types, including now a portable artefact, underlines the basic unity of the ogham-writing tradition in Scotland. At the same time, the use of sloping ‘short’ consonants at Bornais exemplifies a distinctively Scottish strand within the wider ogham tradition.⁹

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 ARG Argyll
 CAI Caithness
 KCD Kincardineshire
 MOR Moray
 ORK Orkney
 SHE Shetland
 SUT Sutherland
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⁹ Although she didn’t divulge it until several years later, Barbara and I first encountered one another in 1985 when she marked my Sixth Year Studies dissertation on Pictish Remains in the North-East. I finally got to meet her in 1988 and our paths have crossed and re-crossed many times since then. Like many other young scholars in our field I benefited from Barbara’s encouragement and support, despite the fact she bore no official responsibility for me. I remain very grateful for this, and for the many excellent seminars, conferences and talks organised by Barbara which I’ve been fortunate to attend, and for all the stimulating people I’ve met through her. So many good things have happened in our field of *Dark Age Studies* because of Barbara’s timely ideas, organisation, and persistence. As a female scholar she continues to be a particular inspiration. I offer this as a token of my appreciation and in pleasant anticipation of the continuing criss-crossing of our paths in the years to come.

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SCANDINAVIAN NAMING-SYSTEMS IN THE HEBRIDES— A WAY OF UNDERSTANDING HOW THE SCANDINAVIANS WERE IN CONTACT WITH GAELS AND PICTS?

Peder Gammeltoft

Introduction

Our knowledge of the Hebrides from the late eight to the thirteenth centuries is rather patchy. As such we do not know who the incoming Scandinavians met: were they Gaels or Picts—or both? We do not know how they interacted with them over time, let alone initially. That being said, not everything about the Hebrides is unknown. For instance, the Southern Hebrides can relatively safely be considered to have been inhabited by a Gaelic speaking people, as this area formed the western part of the Gaelic kingdom of Dál Riata. Whether the Northern Hebrides were also Gaelic-speaking or instead Pictish-speaking is more of a question. Archaeological evidence suggests that the material culture appears to have been largely Pictish at the time of the Viking raids (cf. e.g. Lane 1983; Fisher 2001, 11–12), so the possibility that the Northern Hebrides were Pictish-speaking certainly exists. According to the Irish annals, the Viking raids began in the late eight century.¹ Although the attacks are only referred to in the broadest terms there, it is clear that no area of the Hebrides was spared.

Within a century of the recording of the first attacks in *c.* 794 Scotland underwent great changes. In the 840s Cinæd mac Alpín, a Gael, gained kingship of the Picts and a large-scale Gaelicisation of Pictland started; a process which resulted in the disappearance of Pictish culture and

¹ Cf. e.g. *Annals of Ulster (AU)* 794.7: Uastatio omnium insularum Britanniæ a gentilibus (Devastation of all the islands of Britain by the gentiles). But note that the other *AU* entry from around this time (*AU* 795.3: Loscadh Rechrainne o geinntib & Sci do choscradh & do lomradh), which was formerly translated ‘The burning of Rathlin by the gentiles; and Skye was pillaged and devastated’ is now thought to refer to Lambay Island off Dublin and the taking of the reliquary (*scrín*) (see Downham 2000).

language. At the same time, the Scandinavians appear to have undertaken a large-scale and substantial colonisation of the Northern Isles, the Hebrides and the adjacent mainland of Scotland—at least when the sheer number of place-names of Scandinavian origin in these areas is taken into account. By the middle of the ninth century, a new grouping emerges on the political scene, namely the *Gall-Gaidhel*, ‘foreign Gaels’ (cf. *ESSH* I: 285; Crawford 1987, 47–8). The exact origins and ethnic composition of the Gall-Gaidhel is not entirely certain. Some sources state that they were Gaels who had joined forces with Scandinavians (O’Donovan 1860, vol. III: 138), whereas the name rather indicates a culturally mixed Gaelic and Norse background. The recording of this grouping is our first indications of peaceful Norse-Gaelic contacts. It is not conceivable that such a grouping should emerge without close and peaceful contact between, at least, segments of the Norse and Gaels. From Scandinavian sources, the notion of Norse-Gaelic peaceful co-existence is also corroborated through the large number of people mentioned as originating from the British Isles having typically a Scandinavian first name and a Gaelic byname, e.g. *Helgi Bjólan* (< Gael. *beolán* ‘little mouth’) and *Grímr Kamban* (< Gael. *cammán* ‘crooked fellow’).² It is as though such a name construction was needed in order to switch between a Norse-speaking user-group and Gaelic-speaking one. At any rate the environment in which such a naming tradition evolved must have been bilingual Norse-Gaelic. Of the two naming elements, only the byname has meaning in the ordinary sense. This means that the byname could a) not have been coined without Gaelic language-users, and b) not have become established without a general knowledge of Gaelic within the whole local community, also within the strictly Norse segment. Otherwise it would not make sense to bear a byname of foreign extraction.

The sources thus speak both of the Scandinavians’ violent actions against the indigenous peoples of the Hebrides at the same time as providing indirect evidence of peaceful Norse-Gaelic co-existence during the early phase of Scandinavian engagement in the North Atlantic area. The question is now: *How does the Hebridean place-name material and mutually borrowed place-name elements in the area relate to this information?* Do we see evidence of cultural contacts in this material?

² For further examples of Gaelic bynames and personal names in Old Norse and present-day Scandinavian, see Schulze-Thulin 2001: 71–8.

Place-names as markers of cultural contacts

The sole function of a place-name is to single out one locality from all other localities. As such a place-name does not have to carry meaning in the same way as all other constituents of language. This does not mean that place-names are merely the combination of random sounds; all place-names have their origin in a linguistic entity, which describes the locality to which it refers in one way or the other. As soon as this linguistic entity becomes the established name for the locality, it becomes fixed and loses appellative meaning because of its mono-referential status. In other words, the linguistic entity stops connoting and starts denoting. Because of their mono-referential function, place-names may more easily be transferred from one language to another than other constituents of language. The reason for this is that the place-name itself is merely the term for the locality in question and has, therefore, normally no direct correspondent in the borrowing language. Place-names are thus borrowed from one language into another in much the same way as words for technical innovations for which the recipient language has no term ready at hand (Weinreich 1974, 56); they are borrowed because they are needed in a communicative situation. The occurrence of a foreign place-name in language is thus a sign of contact, as is any loanword, for that matter (Weinreich 1973, 47f.).

By establishing under which circumstances place-names have been passed down to us, we should be able to encode the nature and extent of language contact in the area, at least in broad outlines. When a place-name or a place-name element has been borrowed from one language to another, it becomes part of the borrowing language's onomasticon. From then on it may be used to coin new names in that language. Thus, when a place-name appears to be a hybrid of elements from two languages, it is in reality not. It is a monolingual coinage utilising a borrowed place-name or a borrowed place-name element (cf. Cox 1989, 1-9).

Naming strategies in a contact situation

There are several ways in which the name of a locality may be treated in a language contact situation. A place-name may be transferred into the borrowing language's own onomasticon with only enough phonological adaptation necessary for it to be pronounced in the borrowing

language (see *Phonological adaptation*, next section). At the same time the name is also updated morphologically to fit into the structure of the receiving language (Sandnes 2003, 332–3). This is the simplest type of place-name transfer (*Ibid.*, 329–30), to which, however, additional adaptation strategies may be applied.

Often the constituents, or perceived constituents, of a transferred foreign name can be substituted by similar sounding lexemes found in the borrowing language at the time of transfer (see *Substitution of lexemes*, next section). Depending of the proximity of relationship of the languages in contact, the substituted lexemes may or may not be of the same meaning, although, in situations where the contact languages are far removed from each other it is clear that the substitution took place solely on grounds of similarities in sound and not meaning (Sandnes 2003, 347–52). Alternatively, the transferred place-name may be given an explicatory epexegetic element (see *Specification by epexegetis*, next section, *ibid.*, 352–4). This is an easy and very suitable way of stating what kind of locality the place-name refers to, while at the same time retaining the original name in the new name construction.

If the level of bilingual competence is high in the contact situation, a place-name may undergo translation in the transfer process—either partially or in full (see *Translation of elements*, next section). The translation is not necessarily a direct one-to-one translation, it may merely convey the general sense of the perceived meaning of the foreign place-name at the time of transfer (Sandnes 2003, 332–40).

A final strategy may be to completely disregard whatever has gone before and name a locality from scratch (see *New naming*, next section). This strategy is by far the most common, as it allows the namer to name according his or her own preferences and entirely on the basis of the namer's onomasticon.

Some of the abovementioned strategies which one may apply to a foreign place-name in a new naming situation can modify the foreign place-name to such an extent that it is difficult to see that it is a foreign place-name at all. Thus, seemingly straight-forward place-names of Scandinavian origin in the Scottish Isles might thus be of a non-Scandinavian origin. It can be very difficult to say whether a place-name is of foreign or native origin if translation or substitution of lexemes has taken place. In such cases it is necessary to have an overview of the onomastic situation prior to the language contact phase and also after. In the case of the Hebrides, this is not possible for the majority of the material. Thus some amount of uncertainty in the analysis is inevitable.

Gaelic/'Pictish' influence on Old Norse place-names

The place-name material of the Hebrides, more specifically the body of place-names which has been passed to us from Old Norse, is substantial. The study of place-names of Scandinavian origin in this area is complicated by the fact that they have been transferred into Gaelic and adapted to the Gaelic language system. Furthermore, owing to a general lack of substantial early written sources for the area, early forms of Hebridean place-names are few and far between. Therefore, the study of how the initial period of contact between the peoples of the Hebrides and the incoming Scandinavians came to be expressed in place-names is only carried out with difficulty. The Gaelic overlay has not only blurred the picture as to what is Norse and not Norse in origin, as well as causing some amount of place-name death, it has also made it very difficult to discern what is pre-Norse Gaelic and what is post-Norse Gaelic in the place-name material.

One way of bypassing the complexities of what is pre-Norse and what is post-Norse is by making use solely of Scandinavian-language sources, in this case the three sagas: *Magnúss saga berfættr*, *Orkneyinga saga* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*. The reason for concentrating on these sagas is that they contain the greatest number of names relating to the Hebrides and adjacent Mainland. Chapters 8–11 of the first saga relate to Magnus Barelegs' exploits in the British Isles in 1098; the second saga records the names from some of the journeys of the earls of Orkney into the Hebrides; while the third describes Hákon Hákonson's ill-fated attempts at gaining more control of the Hebrides in 1230, 1248 and 1262–63. Together they list no less than 42 place-names from the Hebrides and the West Coast of Scotland (see Table 7). This material gives us the best picture of the linguistic situation in the area during the Scandinavian era. When looking at this body of place-names it is immediately clear that the picture hitherto presented of the place-name material's 'overwhelmingly Norse' character is somewhat misleading. About a quarter of the Hebridean place-names mentioned in these sagas are of non-Scandinavian origin, and an additional quarter of the material has an original non-Scandinavian place-name as the specific. This limited, but more or less contemporary body of place-names does not support the notion of a clear-cut linguistic break when the Norse surged into the region, as several people from George Henderson (1910) onwards have claimed. The area was obviously not an onomastically 'virgin' area for the incoming Scandinavians. That being said, this

Table 7 Hebridean place-names found in the sagas *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar* (HSH), *Magnúss saga berfetr* (MSB) and *Orkneyinga saga* (Orkn) (Gammeltoft).

Normalised ON Form	Modern Form	Form in Saga/ Skaldic Verse	Source	Onom. Strategy
<i>Barreyjarfjörðr</i>	Sound of Barra (prob.)	<i>í Barreyjar-fjörð</i>	HSH.319.	5
<i>Bót</i>	Bute	<i>til Bótar</i> <i>Bót</i>	HSH.167; HSH.321, 322.	2
<i>Breiðafjörðr</i>	Broadford	<i>til Breiða-fjarðar</i>	HSH.319.	5
<i>Eyin helga</i>	Iona	<i>í Eyna helgu</i> <i>af Eynni helgu</i>	MSB.9; HSH.147.	5
<i>Guðey</i>	Gigha Island	<i>Guðey</i>	HSH.320, 321, 322, 326.	5
<i>Hattarskot</i>	In Gairloch?	<i>Hattarskot</i>	HSH.166.	5
<i>Herrey/Hersey</i>	Arran	<i>Herray</i> <i>Hersey</i>	HSH.322; HSH.326.	5 (or 2; 3?)
<i>Herreyarsund</i>	Sound of Arran	<i>Herreyar-sundi</i>	HSH.322.	5
<i>Hvarf</i>	Cape Wrath	<i>Hvarf</i>	HSH.319.	5
<i>Íl</i>	Islay	<i>til Ílar</i> <i>Íl</i>	MSB.9; HSH.320.	1
<i>Ílarsund</i>	Sound of Islay/ Caol Ìla	<i>í Ílar-sund</i>	HSH.167, 326.	5
<i>Ívist</i>	Uist	<i>Ívist</i>	MSB.8.	2
<i>Kerlingarsteinn</i>	Sgeir na Caillich (?)	<i>Kerlingar-steinn</i>	HSH.319.	4
<i>Kjarbarey</i>	Kerrera	<i>Kjarbarey</i>	HSH.319, 320, 326.	5
<i>Kjarbareyarsund</i>	Sound of Kerrera	<i>í Kjarbareyarsundi.</i>	HSH.265.	5
<i>Kólumkillakirkju inni litlu</i>	St. Orams Chapel, Iona	<i>Kolumkillakirkju hinni litlu</i>	MSB.9.	5
<i>Kumreyjar</i>	Cumbray	<i>Kumreyjar/ Kumureyjar í Kumreyjum</i>	HSH.322; HSH.324, 326.	5
<i>Ljóðhús</i>	Lewis	<i>Ljóðhús</i> <i>í Ljóðhús</i> <i>í Ljóðhúsum til Ljóðhúsa</i>	MSB.8; HSH.167; HSH.314; HSH.319.	2
<i>Lokulomni/ Lochlofni</i>	Loch Lomond	<i>Loku-lomni/ Lochlofni</i>	HSH.323.	1
<i>Malasey/ Níclasey</i>	Lamlash	<i>Malas-eyjar Níclasey</i>	HSH.322; HSH.326.	4

Table 7 (*Cont.*)

Normalised ON Form	Modern Form	Form in Saga/ Skaldic Verse	Source	Onom. Strategy
<i>Mýl</i>	Mull	(<i>mýlsk hjoð</i>); <i>i Mýl</i>	(MSB.8); HSH.319.	1
<i>Mýlarkálfr</i>	Calf of Mull	<i>til Mýlar-kálfs</i> <i>Mylar-kálfi</i>	HSH.326; HSH.327.	5
<i>Mýlarsund</i>	Sound of Mull	<i>i Mýlar-sund</i>	HSH.319.	5
<i>Myrkjafjörðr</i>	Now Loch Linne, Arg.?	<i>i Myrkvafirdi</i>	Orkn.101.	5
<i>Nórar</i>	<i>Ayr</i> (prob.).	<i>Nórar</i>	HSH.322.	5
<i>Norðureyjar</i>	the Northern Hebrides	<i>i Norðureyjum</i>	MSB.9.	5
<i>Rauney</i>	Rona	<i>til Rauneyja</i> <i>Raun-eyja</i>	HSH.319; HSH.327.	5
<i>Ros</i>	Ross	<i>Ros</i>	HSH.314.	1
<i>Saltíri,</i>	Kintyre	<i>Saltíri</i>	MSB.8;	1
<i>Saltíri,</i>		<i>Saltíri</i>	MSB.9;	
<i>Saltíri,</i>		<i>Santíri</i> (Skaldic)	MSB.9;	
<i>Sátíri,</i>		<i>undir Satíri</i>	HSH.167;	
<i>Sandey</i>	Sanday	<i>Sátíri.</i> <i>Sandey</i>	HSH.320. MSB.9,	5
<i>Satíniseið</i>	Tarbert, Kintyre	<i>Sandey</i> <i>Satíniseið</i> <i>til Satíris-eið.</i>	MSB.10; HSH.320, 321.	5
<i>Satínismúli</i>	Mull of Kintyre	<i>fyrir Satíris-múla</i> <i>Sátíris-mula</i>	HSH.167; HSH.322, 326.	5
<i>Skíð</i>	Skye	<i>á Skíði;</i> <i>i skíð</i>	MSB.8; HSH.327; HSH.167, 314.	2
<i>Skíðsund</i>	Sound of Skye	<i>i Skíð-sund</i>	HSH.319.	5
<i>Skipafjörðr</i>	Loch Long	<i>Skipafjörðr</i>	HSH.323.	4 (or 5?)
<i>Skotland</i>	Scotland	<i>af Skotlandi</i>	Orkn.05.	5
<i>Skotlandsfirðir</i>	Firths and sea- lochs on the west-coast of Scotland	<i>i Skotlandsfjörðu</i>	MSB.8.	5
<i>Suðureyjar</i>	The Hebrides	<i>til Suðureyja</i> <i>Suðreyjar</i> <i>i Suðreyjum</i>	MSB.8; Orkn.04; HSH.319, etc.	5
<i>Súlnasker</i>	Sula Skerries	<i>Súlna-sker</i>	HSH.319.	5
<i>Tyrvist</i>	Tiree	<i>Tyrvist</i>	MSB.8.	2

Table 7 (Cont.)

Normalised ON Form	Modern Form	Form in Saga/ Skaldic Verse	Source	Onom. Strategy
<i>Vatsfjörðr</i>	A sea loch in Skye?	<i>í Vatsfirði</i>	Orkn.22.	5
<i>Vestrafjörðr</i>	L. Dunveggan or L. Snizort	<i>í Vestr-firði</i> <i>í Vēstra-fjörð</i> <i>á Skíði</i>	HSH.166; HSH.327.	5

Key to Source:
HSH = *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*; MSB = *Magnúss saga berfjet*; Orkn = *Orkneyinga Saga*
Key to Onomastic strategy:
1: Phonological adaptation only; 2: Substitution of lexemes; 3: Specification by epexegetis;
4: Translation, either partially or fully; 5: New naming according to own onomasticon and disregarding of earlier name(s).

place-name material is on the whole distinctly Scandinavian in character and the place-names of a non-Scandinavian origin are fully integrated into the Norse onomasticon. With regard to the survival rate of this body of Scandinavian place-names, had these three sagas not existed our knowledge of these names would have been much reduced. Of the 42 place-names found here, 30 no longer exist in a form derived from Old Norse. Place-name death as a result of language change obviously occurred not only when Scandinavian became a dominant language in the Hebrides but certainly also after it died out. The instances of name death in the transfer from Scandinavian to Gaelic may not be entirely the result of the wish to name anew; it may rather be because some of the localities with Scandinavian (influenced) name forms had parallel Gaelic equivalents throughout the Scandinavian period which would have been ‘reinstated’ when Scandinavian died out.

Phonological adaptations

Of the ten place-names which have been borrowed into Old Norse from the indigenous peoples of the Hebrides, five are definitely or most probably transferred from Gaelic, namely *Bót* (Bute), *Lokulomni/Lochlofní* (Loch Lomond), *Ros* (Ross), *Santíri/Satíri* (Kintyre), *Týrvist* (Tiree).³ These

³ *Bute* (1093 Bot), possibly originally Gael. *Bód* ‘Island of fire’; Loch Lomond (8th c. *lacu Lummonu*) < Gael *loch* ‘lake’ + mountain name *Lomond*; *Ross* (1086 *Rosse*) <

are seemingly all original Gaelic coinages, apart from possibly *Ros* which may also be of Pictish origin. The remaining five place-names: *Íl* (Islay), *Ívist* (Uist), *Ljóðhús* (Lewis), *Mýl* (Mull), *Skīð* (Skye) are of non-Gaelic origin, but whether or not they have been transferred into Old Norse via Gaelic is unknown.

Some names, like Mull and Skye, have been recorded already by Ptolemy in the second century AD, as *Malaíos* and *Scetis nesos*, and Islay slightly later in 568 as *Ili*. Even the original language of these names is uncertain, though often the convenient label of 'Pictish' is attached to them. Whether it is significant or not that these ten place-name transfers are split evenly between place-names of Gaelic origin and place-names of a 'Pictish' origin, is impossible to say. The material is too small to state anything firmly from it. However, the transfers alone show that there must have been contact of a nature sufficient enough to secure the transfers.

Of the above ten names, *Íl* (Islay), *Lokulomni/Lochlofni* (Loch Lomond), *Mýl* (Mull), *Ros* (Ross) and *Santíri/Satíri* (Kintyre) have received only slight phonological adaptations when transferred into Old Norse. Why the initial consonant of *Kintyre* (807 *Ciunntire*), from Gaelic *Ceanntíre* 'End of the land', should be represented in Old Norse as *S-*, is not known. Perhaps the Gaelic pronunciation was more palatal at the time of transfer? It is also worth noting that the Old Norse form of Kintyre varies considerably within the sagas. Normally the form is *Satíri* or *Saltíri*. However, the form in the Skaldic verse,⁴ on which this particular saga account is based, is clearly written *Santíri*, i.e. with a medial *-n-*. It would seem that the Gaelic sound pattern in this case was so far removed from Old Norse that the name needed several updates before becoming sufficiently palatable.

It is interesting to note that the place-names of non-Scandinavian origin take the same general gender as Scandinavian place-names of similar denotation. For instance island-names like *Íl* and *Mýl* are

Gael. *ros* 'a promontory' or a related Pictish word; *Kintyre* (807 *Ciunntire*) < Gael. *ceann* 'head, point, end' and *tír* 'a land': 'End of the land'; *Tíree* (c. 850 *Tír Iath*) < possibly Gael. *tír* 'a land' + personal name *Ith*: 'Land of Ith' (?), cf. Field 1980; Watson 1904; Watson 1926.

⁴ Skaldic verse is generally taken to have been composed within the lifetime of the people having taken part in the events described in the poem. In other words, it is contemporary or almost contemporary with its subject-matter. Thus, when skaldic place-name forms differ considerably from later saga forms, there is good reason to assume that the skaldic place-name form is the more reliable.

feminine, as in e.g. *Ilarsund* and *Mýlarkálfr*, where the *-ar-* represents a feminine genitive morpheme, on analogy with other island-names in *ey*, f. 'island' and a number of derived island-name types (cf. *NSL* 1997: 46–49). The same is naturally also the case with the rest of the adapted foreign place-name transfers. However, since their forms are based on existing Old Norse lexical items or are translation loans, this is hardly surprising.

Substitution of lexemes

Names like *Bót* (Bute), *Ívist* (Uist), *Ljóðhús* (Lewis), *Skíð* (Skye) and *Tyrvist* (Tiree) have not only undergone phonological adaptation, they have also undergone lexeme substitution. For instance the island of *Bót* seems to have gained its Old Norse form under influence from ON *bót* f., which carries a number of meanings, not least 'a remedy' and 'an atonement', etc. Similarly, the Old Norse form of *Skíð* seems to have been influenced by ON *skíð* n. 'a ski, split wooden board'. As such it would not be surprising to see simple monosyllabic place-names gain a form similar to an appellative in the new language—a similarity in form could even be purely coincidental. However, when turning to the remaining instances, which have been interpreted in Old Norse as being compound formations, it is obvious that coincidence is not at play here. Each of the remaining names appears to consist of two place-name elements which can convincingly be interpreted as Old Norse words. For this to be the case, a deliberate lexeme substitution or lexeme update to Old Norse lexemes must have taken place. Thus, *Ívist* can readily be understood by Old Norse speakers as containing the ON *í* prep 'in, between' and ON *vist* f. 'a dwelling', i.e. the 'In-dwelling'. The same is the case with *Ljóðhús*, which conveys the compound meaning of 'House of people' or possibly 'Verse house' (< ON *ljóðr* m. 'people' or ON *ljóð* n. 'verse or line in a song' + ON *hús* n. 'house'). With *Tyrvist*, however, only the final element *-vist* can be recognised as being ON *vist* f. 'a dwelling'. What is evident is that the 'meanings' of these place-names are not very place-name-like, although they appear to contain elements such as ON *hús* n. 'house' and the relatively rare *vist* f. 'dwelling' as generic elements. It is the very strangeness, onomastically speaking, of the specific elements that cause these names to stand out and reveal themselves as foreign place-names having undergone adaptation in Old Norse.

It is very important to recognise that lexeme-substitution plays a relatively active role in onomastics. Although place-names only denote and do not carry meaning as such, there seems to be a general wish among place-name users that a place-name, or parts thereof, may appear to have 'meaning'. The 'meaning' gained here is not necessarily locality- or place-name-related. Instead, the purpose of lexeme-substitution seems to be to give the place-name an air of transparency by exchanging incomprehensible elements of the place-name with elements from the users' own lexicon. As such, the place-name is reanalysed and updated in relation to the existing lexicon. It should be noted that lexeme-substitution is not solely reserved for place-names in contact linguistic environments, they also occur quite frequently in monolingual language areas. An example from Denmark is the town of *Grenå*, which appears to mean 'Twig stream' but which actually goes back to an original *Grindhøgh* (recorded c. 1250) 'Gravel mound', or 'Mound by the gate' (cf. *DS* 12: 113). The development of *Grind-* to *Gren-* can be accounted for through normal phonetic developments, but the final element *-høgh* > *-å* cannot. Here, the final element of the place-name has become too 'worn' by the Danish weakening of unstressed syllables that it was not possible to recognise what the final element was, cf. the late fifteenth-century form *Grindw* (27/9 1484). Hereafter it was reanalysed as containing the living appellative *å* 'stream', and thus updated according to present lexicon and not as would have been expected on grounds of etymology and phonological developments. In this respect, lexematic substitutions may help explain why some place-names have developed differently from what would be expected according to standard phonetic developments.

Specification by epexegetis

As with the above naming strategy, substitution of lexemes, specification by epexegetis is not solely a contact phenomenon. The addition of an epexegetic element occurs wherever the need arises for a specification of the type of locality a place-name refers to. In Scandinavia, many of the names belonging to the older place-name layers are so-called derived place-names, i.e. derived from ordinary word-stock by means of the addition of a suffix, such as e.g. *-ing*, *-l*, *-s*, *-und*, etc. Of the derived type are old Norwegian derived island-names like **Eikund*, **Hqm* and **His*. Their modern forms *Eigerøy* (via **Eikundarey*), *Hamarøy* and *Hisarøy*,

however, show that they have at some stage in history been supplied with the epexegetic element Norw. *øy*, ON *ey* f. 'island' in order to specify the kind of locality they refer to (*NSL* 1997: 49, 131, 194, 214). The reason for this addition seems to have arisen from the need to have a, denotatively, more transparent place-name, and probably also under influence from compounded place-names.

For some reason, this strategy is not very visible in the present material. This may be owing to the relatively small size of the material, or because epexegetis was not a common feature in the Scandinavian onomasticon in the Viking Age. However, since place-names to which an epexegetic element has been added are visually and structurally similar to compounded place-names it is very difficult to pick these names out from the material. The only way in which such names may be discovered is if they can clearly be determined as being a borrowed place-name. An example of this seems to be the specific of the Scandinavian name for *Sound of Barra*, *Barreyjarfjörðr*, is the island name of *Barrey*, now *Barra*. The etymology of this name is not entirely clear. The first element might contain ON *barr* n. 'outermost twigs of a deciduous tree' or possibly even 'scrub' or the ON adjective *barr* 'bare, uncovered', (cf. *ONP* II: 72–73), although it is more likely that it derives ultimately from Old Celtic *barr-* 'top, summit, peak' (Coates 1990, 53–54). If the first element is Old Celtic, then the final element of the Scandinavian form of the name, *-ey*, must be seen as being an epexegetic element. To the Scandinavian-speaking place-name user group, the name **Barr-* would not have contained enough information on its own to reveal that the name in question referred to an island.

Translation of elements

While the transfer of place-names from one language to another signal language contact in the broadest possible respect, such names themselves cannot tell us anything about the intensity of the contact. A few of the names in the material, however, signal that the contact to Gaelic was deep-founded and probably extended to widespread bilingualism. On the surface, the place-names *Kerlingarsteinn* (*Sgeir na Caillich*), *Malasey* (*Lamlash* (< *Eilean Molaise* (?))), *Skipafjörðr* (*Loch Long*), and possibly also *Ílarsund* (*Sound of Islay/Caol Ila*) look like they are straight-forward Old Norse place-name constructions. However, if one checks the meanings with today's Gaelic place-name equivalents, it is obvious that they are translations of each other.

Whether the names have been translated from Gaelic into Old Norse or vice-versa is a matter of conjecture. Nonetheless, it must be considered improbable that a place-name like *Lamlash* should represent a Gaelic translation of an original Old Norse place-name, considering that the specific appears to be that of the Gaelic saint *Molaise*. Place-name translations are of real significance in assessing the amount of Norse-Gaelic contact. Translating place-names from one language to another is arduous and relatively unnecessary (a name of a firth functions equally well irrespective of it being called *Loch Long* or *Skipafjörðr*), but it testifies to the name-users actually being able to function actively within two distinct onomasticons. I mentioned above that this type of names is very rare indeed. A recent study from Orkney suggests that less than one percent of the place-names there seem to be translation loans (Sandnes 2003: 334). In this material the number is ten times higher. The translations are not always one-to-one translations, for instance, the name of *Kerlingarsteinn* 'The stone of the hag' is not exactly similar to that of *Sgeir na Caillich* 'The sea-rock of the hag/Cailleach', but the translation of Gaelic *Cailleach* with ON *kerlingr* '(old) woman, hag' is evident.

New naming

Although the above 14 place-names are of significance, the remaining 28 or so examples are genuine Scandinavian constructions, albeit of varying nature and of varying relevance to this discussion. Seventeen of the 28 names must be reckoned to be genuine primary Scandinavian coinages, coined without regard to the existing place-name material. Thus a place-name like *Hvarf*, now known as *Cape Wrath*, has been coined solely because the namer found the ON word *hvarf* n. 'a bend, turning, disappearance' the most descriptive for the locality. Even a brief look at a modern map of Scotland makes the appropriateness of this Old Norse place-name clear. Similarly, names like *Breiðafjörðr* (Broadford), *Kumreyjar* (Cumbray), *Sandey* (Sanday, near Kintyre) and *Súlnasker* (Sula Skerries) also seem to record the relevant feature or features of the locality, as seen from a Scandinavian perspective.

The remaining eleven or so place-names are also Old Norse coinages but unlike the above place-names, not primary place-name formation. Instead they are formally secondary place-name formations utilising an already existing place-name as the specific element in a new place-name formation. For instance, in a name like *Mylarsund*, now Sound

of Mull, the generic element ON *sund* 'sound, strait' is modified by the specific *Mylar*, the genitive singular form of *Myl*, the Old Norse name for *Mull*. Almost a quarter of the entire place-name material is of this type and, surprisingly, the majority of place-names forming the specific element in these names are of pre-Norse origin. This seems to underline the naturalness whereby many of the non-Scandinavian place-names of the area were borrowed into the Old Norse onomasticon. In this respect it is somewhat surprising that there are seemingly so few epexegetic place-name constructions in the material. This is particularly surprising considering that epexegetic place-names are quite common in Gaelic place-names of Scandinavian origin, such as *Eilean Orasaigh*, Coll, where the word *eilean* 'island' has been added to a place-name of Scandinavian origin in order to signal the type of locality (see *Specification by epexegetis* above).

This material clearly speaks of contact between the incoming Scandinavians and the indigenous peoples in the Hebrides, otherwise we would not have seen any foreign influence on the Scandinavian Hebridean onomasticon. But what does this contact signify? This is a relatively complex and probably impossible question to answer, but the following generalisations are probably safe to make. Taking into account that the place-names which have transferred directly with only minimal phonetic adaptation, including the group of lexeme substitutions, are the names of large localities, the contact seen from these names is not necessarily of a long-lasting or deep-founded nature. The contact need only have been long enough for the names to have been borrowed into Old Norse and accepted as the proper names for the localities. This type of contact may not be any more than of a mere exploratory nature—although the possibility does exist that the contact phase extended beyond this.

Where we do see the seemingly best evidence for deep-founded contact is from the small group of place-name translations. Such translations cannot have been done without a high degree of bilingualism in the speech-community. The problem here is, unfortunately, that we cannot be entirely sure at what stage of the Scandinavian era the translations were made. Were they created initially or in the final phase—or in-between? In the case of *Malasey* (being, apparently, the translation *Lamlash*, presumably originally **Eilean Molaise*, it seems likely that this name originates from the early period of contact, or for as long as the name was discernable as **Eilean Molaise*. Whether the other names are also early is a matter of conjecture—the saga in which they

occur describes events from the thirteenth century, which is pushing towards the latter part of the Scandinavian era in the Hebrides, so no help is to be found there.

What is important to recognise, though, is that this place-name material corroborates occurrences such as the *Gall-Gaidhel* 'foreign-Gaels' and the flourishing of Gaelic bynames and personal names in the *Landnámabók* and the sagas from the ninth century onwards. For some reason the deep-founded contact, i.e. contact resulting in place-name translations, seems to have been exclusively with the Gaels. The other political players in the Hebrides at the beginning of the Viking period, the Picts, are hardly visible in the material outside place-name transfers which may relate to contact of an exploratory nature only. Was Pictland already on the verge of collapse when the Scandinavians surged in (was it in fact the cause?), or was the Hebrides more Gaelicised than the archaeological sources can convey? Why this is so can only be surmised, but it is clear from this place-name material that the contact phases between the Scandinavians and the Picts on one side and the Gaels on the other, appear to be somewhat different from each other. As far as this place-name material may be taken, the most deep-founded contact of the Scandinavians in the area appears to have been with the Gaels.

Rounding off

Hopefully, this brief survey of whether place-names and place-name elements may say something about the Norse/Pictish-Gaelic contact or not, has given some scope for further study on the subject. I hope to have outlined under which circumstances onomastic interference occurs, and how it manifests itself in the Old Norse naming system as seen in selected sagas. The greatest problem connected with investigating Gaelic/Pictish-Norse contact by means of onomastic evidence in the Hebrides is mostly concerned with determining what is pre-Norse and what is post-Norse in the place-name material, especially in the areas which were Gaelic-speaking already before the arrival of Old Norse speech. The problem is especially acute when dealing with today's place-name material. However, by focussing on the Hebridean place-name material in the contemporary, or nearly contemporary, Scandinavian sources one may bypass the overlying Gaelic 'filter', which has to some extent obscured the picture. Some of the problems are related to the

way in which place-names of Scandinavian origin have been adapted to the Gaelic language system, but place-name death caused by the overlay of post-Norse Gaelic place-names certainly also plays a role. By examining the place-name material in the *Orkneyinga Saga*, *Magnúss saga berfætr* and *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, I hope to have proven the worth of such sources as legitimate and valuable exponents of the extent and character of the Norse-Gaelic/Pictish contact in the area. This material indicates, more than any other, the contact between the indigenous peoples of the area and the incoming Scandinavians, a type of contact which—on the place-name material investigated—seems to have led to widespread bilingualism in the area (cf. Gammeltoft 2004). The picture presented here of the situation in the Hebrides is far from final or absolute, but I hope that it has enabled us to see a more nuanced and complex picture of the Gaelic/Pictish-Norse Viking-Age contact than has hitherto been recognised.

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THE ROCK OF THE IRISHMEN:
AN EARLY PLACE-NAME TALE FROM
FIFE AND KINROSS¹

Simon Taylor

There exists in the cartulary of St Andrews Priory a group of property records which derive from the Culdee (*Céle Dé*) house of Lochleven, the ruins of which are still visible on what is today known as St Serf's Island in the south-east corner of that loch (see Hall, this volume and Illus. 63). These records form a discrete group within the cartulary, which exists in the National Archives of Scotland as GD/45/27/8 (hereafter N), and which was printed by the Bannatyne Club in 1841 (*St A. Lib.*) following the order of the cartulary itself. The early Lochleven material (hereafter L) is on fos. 50v to 52r, printed as *St A. Lib.* 113–18.

N is a complex document made up of many hands from the thirteenth century onwards. The scribe who copied L is, as far as I can ascertain, unique to this section. The opening text of L states that it has been translated and abbreviated from a book written originally in the old language of the Scots (*antiquo Scotorum idiomate*) i.e. Gaelic 'lest with the passing of time unnecessary litigation and violent dispute uselessly assail the ears of kings, nobles and bishops'.² L was copied into N after 29 April 1276, since on the same page and in the same column (fo. 50v col. b) it directly follows an *Inspeximus* issued by William bishop of Brechin dated at Montrose in that year on the Wednesday before the feast of the apostles Philip and James (*St A. Lib.* 111–12, and facsimile following p. 112).

L was probably first compiled around 1130, after the Culdees of Lochleven had found themselves having to assert their rights to part of the lands of Kirkness, a large estate which lay on the neighbouring

¹ I would like to thank Paul Bibire, Dauvit Broun, Nicholas Evans, Mark Hall, David Munro, Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh and Alex Woolf for useful discussions on various aspects of this chapter. Above all I would like to thank Barbara Crawford, with whom I first explored and discussed Kirkness in the early 1990s. To her this chapter is gratefully dedicated.

² 'ne superuacua questio et tumultuosa disceptatio aures regum et principum et pontificum temporis tractu inutiliter percellat' *St A. Lib.* 113.

mainland. A prominent member of the Fife aristocracy, Robert the Burgundian,³ lord of Lochoreshire, the large territory⁴ which lay immediately south of Kirkness, laid claim to a quarter of Kirkness, or, in the somewhat more lurid words of the Culdees themselves: "That furnace and fire of all iniquity Robert the Burgundian, knight, evilly and artfully vexed and harassed with troubles and injuries the monks [of Lochleven]: in short he wanted to take away from them a quarter of Kirkness in the vehemence of his rapacity and of his unbridled tyranny".⁵ Robert had established himself in Lochoreshire possibly through marriage with a local heiress, and probably with royal backing. Over a twenty-year period between c.1128 and c.1147 Robert witnesses six of King David's charters.⁶

This assertion of St Serf's rights, which was successfully made in front of the leading men of Fife c.1128, forms the culmination of this collection of early St Serf material. It consists of 11 items (not including the pre-ambles, for which see above).⁷ Of the 10 property records which precede it, three deal with Kirkness. No other place is mentioned more than once, except for St Serf's Island itself and *Pittenmochan, closely associated with Kirkness, also mentioned three times. It may be that this challenge to St Serf's on their very doorstep precipitated the detailing of other lands and churches the Culdees laid claim to.⁸ They may have been entered into a Gospel book, very much as the Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer were written into a Gospel Book at almost exactly the same time, and no doubt in the face of similar challenges (see

³ A charter (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Top. Yorks., b 14, p. 477) published by G. W. S. Barrow 1998 shows that Robert's son was Constantine of Lochore, a prominent member of the Fife nobility in the later twelfth century. In the light of the form of the name in the above-mentioned charter, Barrow also suggests that Robert may have taken his name from Bourguignon near Beaune (Côte d'Or) in Burgundy, rather than from 'Burgundy' itself (*ibid.* 253).

⁴ Co-extensive with the medieval parish of Auchterderran (later split into the parishes of Auchterderran and Ballingry); see also Taylor 2006, Introductions to Auchterderran and Ballingry parishes.

⁵ 'Fornax et incendium totius iniquitatis scilicet Robertus Burgonensis miles grauaminibus et iniuriis prefatos uiros religiosos nequiter et calumpniiose uexauit et fatigauit, volens precise feruore sue rapacitatis et infrenate tyrannidis ab eis auferre quartam partem de Kyrknes' *St A. Lib.* 117.

⁶ See *David I Chrs.* nos. 33, 36, 88, 89, 90, 99.

⁷ These items I am calling L1 to L11.

⁸ Note that L is not a complete list of lands and rents belonging to Lochleven by the 1120s. For example it does not mention Bogie of Thorfinn's son (Kirkcaldy and Dysart parish FIF), granted by King Macbethad. However, a copy of a property note recording this grant existed in the now lost Register of St Andrews (see *St A. Lib.* 12).

Jackson 1972, 94). The Book of Kells in Ireland also contains property records, mainly from the first half of the twelfth century. It is therefore probable, but not certain, that the ‘old volume (vetus volumen) written in the ancient language of the Scots’, referred to in the pre-amble to L, was also part of a Gospel Book (see Broun 1995, 32).

Nor is it certain when the Gaelic texts underlying L were translated into Latin. It could have been any time following the judgment against Robert and 1276, when, as we have seen, they were copied into N. The most likely occasion for their translation would have been when the abbey of Lochleven was given to the Augustinian priory of St Andrews by Bishop Robert of St Andrews sometime between 1152 and 1156 (*St A. Lib.* 43). The priory, founded in 1140,⁹ represented a non-Gaelic-speaking strand in the complex ecclesiastical landscape of mid-twelfth-century Kilrymont (St Andrews). When the priory acquired what would have been still a Gaelic-speaking monastery with its lands and revenues it would have been strongly motivated to convert any documentation relating to its new acquisition into the linguistic currency of the wider western Christendom, and one with which it could much more easily identify.

It should come as no surprise that this collection of documents precipitated in writing by a dispute in west Fife in the 1120s should be in Gaelic, since much other evidence points to the fact that Gaelic was the predominant language in the area until the early thirteenth century, and seems to have survived alongside Scots for at least another 100 years (see Taylor 1994). From the record of the hearing (L11), however, it does not seem that written evidence was presented. The concluding part of this records reads:

And so this matter was settled in the form of a judicial sentence and by oath. These are the clerics who swore an oath regarding the marches of the vill of Kirkness: Duftah¹⁰ priest and abbot, Sarran son of Sodelue,¹¹ Eogan a monk, Donald grandson or descendant of Leod,¹² Morrehat,¹³

⁹ The traditional date for the foundation is 1144, but A. A. M. Duncan argues cogently for a foundation date of 1140 (2005).

¹⁰ Presumably abbot of Lochleven, modern Gaelic *Dubhthach*, anglicised Duthac.

¹¹ *Sodelne*, N, *St A. Lib.* Reeves is no doubt correct in suggesting this emendation, Irish *Sodelbh* (‘good visage’), a woman’s name (1864, 130), but both a male and a female name in *CGH*.

¹² Latin *nepos* probably translating Gaelic *úa* or *ó(a)*, ‘grandson, descendant’. Leod is originally a borrowing from Norse *Ljótr* (Jackson 1972, 61).

¹³ Probably representing either Muiredach or Murchad (both anglicised Murdo). The former name is represented as *Moridac*, the Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer II

a man of venerable old age and an Irishman, and Cathan, an old man. And in this way the said Robert was defeated in front of everybody.¹⁴

As Dauvit Broun states 'All these records...played no part in the transactions which they record. They were written up later (and therefore the past tense was used) and were no doubt intended as an aid to securing the transactions for the future' (1995, 33). It would certainly seem that the main way in which the Culdees secured their victory was through non-written means, with the named clerics swearing that the marches of the vill of Kirkness as it belonged to Lochleven were as the Culdees claimed. During this dispute the information contained in the Macbethad and Gruoch text detailing the marches of Kirkness (L2, *St A. Lib.* 114) will have been widely discussed. The rubric of L11 describes it as 'a perambulation between the lands of Kirkness and Lochore'.¹⁵ This is not strictly speaking an accurate description of L11, but a perambulation must have been involved, and L2 is likely to have informed it.

In the following discussion of L2 it should always be borne in mind that there is a close link between on the one hand the marches described in the text recording the original grant, which (apart from the Lochleven foundation account in L1) opens L, and on the other the challenge to Lochleven's right to all of Kirkness, which concludes L. It is this link which may explain some of the anomalies and anachronisms which make L2 such a difficult text.

Before going any further, let us look at the text of L2 itself, from N fo. 51r col. a–b. It is printed as *St A. Lib.* 114 (facsimile between *St A. Lib.* 112 and 113).

Modern capitalisation and punctuation have been used throughout, as has standard word-division. Expansions have been made silently, unless indicated by square brackets. Letters u and v are given as they appear in the ms. The heading (underlined) is written in red ink.

(Jackson 1972, 30, 45), *Murethach* c.1198 *St A. Lib.* 319. See Reeves 1864, 130 (note) and Cowan 1981, 17–18. *Hiberniensis* here clearly refers to a Hiberno-Gael. His old age suggests that he has been resident in the vicinity, probably at Lochleven, for some time, and indicates contact between the Irish and Scottish Church in the early twelfth century, probably within a Culdee context.

¹⁴ 'Isti sunt clerici qui iurauerunt super finibus uille de Kyrkenes: Dustah sacerdos et abbas, et Sarran filius Sodelne, et Eugenius monachus, et Douinalde nepos Leod, et Morrehat uir venerande senectutis et hiberniensis, et Cathan senex. Et sic uictus fuit predictus R coram omnibus.' (*St A. Lib.* 118). *Dustah*, N; *Duflah*, *St A. Lib.*

¹⁵ Perambulacio inter terras de Kyrknesse et Lochore.

Qualiter Machbet filius Finlach et Gruoch dederunt Sancto Seruano Kyrkenes

Machbet¹⁶ filius Finlach contulit pro suffragiis or[aci]onum et Gruoch filia Bodhe rex et regina Scotorum Kyrkenes Deo omnipotenti et Keledeis prefate insule Lochleuine cum suis finibus et terminis. Hii enim sunt fines et termini de Kyrkenes et uillule que dicitur Pethmokanne:¹⁷ a loco Moneloccodhan usque ad annem qui dicitur Leuine, et hoc in latitudine; item a publica strata que ducit apud Hinhirkethy usque ad Saxum Hiberniensium, et hoc in longitudine. Et dicitur Saxum Hiberniensium q[ua] Malcolmus /fo.51r col. b/ rex filius Duncani concessit eis salinagium quod scotice dicitur chonnane. Et uenerunt Hibernienses ad Kyrkenes ad domum cuiusdam uiri nomine Mochan qui tunc fuit absens, et solummodo mulieres erant in domo, quas oppresserunt uiolenter Hibernienses, non tamen sine rubore et uerecundia. Rei et euentu ad aures prefati Mochan peruento, iter quam tocus domi festinauit, et inuenit ibi Hibernienses in eadem domo cum matre sua. Exhortacione etenim matri sue sepius facta ut extra domum ueniret, que nullatenus uoluit set Hibernienses uoluit protegere et eis pacem dare; quos omnes prefatus uir in ulcionem tanti facinoris ut oppressores mulierum et barbaros et sacrilegos in medio flamme ignis vna cum matre sua uiriliter combussit. Et ex hac causa dicitur locus ille Saxum Hiberniensium.

Translation¹⁸

How Macbethad son of Findlaech and Gruoch gave Kirkness to St Serf
Macbethad son of Findlaech and Gruoch daughter of Boite, king and queen of Scots, granted for the support of prayers Kirkness to Almighty God and to the Culdees of the said island of Lochleven with its bounds and marches. For these are the bounds and marches¹⁹ of Kirkness and of the little vill which is called *Pittenmochan: from the place Boglochty as far as the river which is called Leven, and this in breadth; then from the public causeway which leads to Inverkeithing as far as the Rock of the Irishmen, and this in length. And it is called the Rock of the Irishmen because King Malcolm son of Duncan granted to them a salt-pan which in Gaelic is called *chomane*. And the Irishmen came to Kirkness to the house of a certain man by the name of Mochan, who was then absent, and only the women were in the house. These the Irishmen oppressed violently, and not without disgrace and shame. When the said Mochan heard about these events he hastened his journey home as soon as possible

¹⁶ First two lines indented to receive capital *m* of *Machbet*. This was never executed. However the main hand has written a small capital *m* opposite the start of the text, in the left-hand margin of the column.

¹⁷ *Pothmokanne* with *e* written above first *o* in main hand.

¹⁸ As far as I am aware this is the first time an English translation of this text has appeared in print. The opening sentence is translated in Donaldson 1985, 156.

¹⁹ For these marches, see Illus. 63 & discussion.

and found the Irishmen there in the house with his mother. Over and over again he begged his mother to come out of the house, and she did not want to at all, but wanted to protect the Irishmen and obtain peace for them. So the said man [Mochan] in revenge for such a great crime manfully burnt them all as oppressors of women, barbarians and profaners in the midst of the fire's flame, his mother along with them. And this is why the place is called the Rock of the Irishmen.

Notes (see also *Illus.* 63)

There are only three extant property records concerning grants by King Macbethad (1040–57), all three in favour of the monastery of St Serf's, Loch Leven. Two concern Kirkness (L2 and L3); while one records a grant of part of the lands of Bogie by Kirkcaldy (see above footnote 8). All three are printed together in *ESC* no. 5.²⁰

This is the only record of the name of Macbethad's queen which can in any way be called contemporary. She is called 'Dame Grwok' in Wyntoun, *Chron.* ii p. 128, but is not named in either Fordun or Bower. Her memory survived locally in the name of a well, *Growokys Wel*, near Ballingry FIF, which is mentioned c.1400 as one of the marches of Kirkness (*St A. Lib.* 1).²¹ This suggests that the land which was being granted to Lochleven belonged in fact to Gruoch rather than Macbethad, whose patrimony was in Moray.

Boite's only other occurrence in the earlier historical record is in AU 1033, which records the death of his grandson (or son, according to Duncan 1975, 113) at the hands of Mael Coluim II. The entry reads 'The grandson of Boete son of Cinaed was killed by Mael Coluim son of Cinaed.'²² He is not named by Fordun, Wyntoun or Bower.

'for the intercession of prayers' (pro sufragiis oracionum). This is the same phrase used in Macbethad's grant concerning Bogie, for which see footnote 8 above.

²⁰ These notes generally supersede rather than complement Lawrie's notes to *ESC* no. 5.

²¹ Probably the gushing spring on the slopes above and to the south-west of Ballingry Farm at NT168977.

²² 'M[ac] m[ac] Boete m[ac] Cinaedha do marbad le Mael Colaim m[ac] Cinaedha.' It is rendered in the English translation 'Baete' (AU, 473). In the Scottish king-list in the Poppleton manuscript Lulach is described as nephew of the son of Boite (*Lulac nepos filii Boide*, Anderson 1980, 254). A. O. Anderson would see the name as perhaps an Irish form of the name 'Boethius', comparing it with Búit(t)e of Monasterboice Co. Louth (*ES* i, 571).

*Pittenmochan (early forms *Pethmokanne* 1040 × 1057 *St A. Lib.* 114 [L2]; *Pettenmokan* and *Pettenmokane* 1093 × 1097 *St A. Lib.* 115 [L6]; *Petnemokane* and *Petnemokanne* 1097 × 1107 *St A. Lib.* 115 [L4]). The name appears only within L. The first element is clearly the common Scottish Gaelic word *pett* ‘land-holding, estate’, and its description as a little vill or farm (using the diminutive *villula*) perhaps reflects the status of estates with this name as perceived by the (probably twelfth-century) translator.²³ Or it may be that the diminutive *villula* expresses a subordinate relationship to Kirkness, as the marches which L2 describes are the marches for both Kirkness and *Pittenmochan, with the former including the latter. L4 states that King Edgar (1097–1107) granted *Pittenmochan to St Serf. However, L6 states that Edgar’s predecessor and uncle Domnall III (1093–97) gave liberties to the vills of Kirkness and *Pittenmochanne, implying that the Culdees already held both these estates before Edgar’s apparent grant (which we know for a fact was the case as far as Kirkness was concerned). All this indicates is that it was important for Lochleven to obtain confirmations of earlier royal grants from each king in turn, especially in the shifting political sands of the second half of the eleventh century, and this is most vividly seen in the above-mentioned L6, which in its few lines of text manages to mention five kings, from Donnchad (Duncan) II (died 1094) to David I, who, as I argue above, was king at the time these records were compiled. It is true that in both L4 and L6 *Pittenmochan has been elevated to the status of a vill (*villa*), but following King Edgar’s ‘grant’ in L4 it is never heard of again. It is possible, though not provable, that it was the quarter of Kirkness that Robert tried fruitlessly to take away from Lochleven, as per L11.

The form of the name in L2 (*Pethmokanne*) has no trace of the extra medial syllable, and could well represent a scribal variation of **Pethmochanne* i.e. ‘the *pett* of Mochan’, the hero of the tale. However, the extra syllable in the four other forms of the name (L4, 6) needs to be explained. At first sight it looks very like the definite article, but this would not accord well with a personal-name specific. It is more likely that this *-en/-ne* represents not a definite article but a diminutive

²³ This is the earliest recorded *Pit*-place-name south of the Mounth. The only earlier ones anywhere occur in five separate place-names or place-descriptions in the Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer from Aberdeenshire, some of which purport to go back to the sixth century, but which probably relate mainly to the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. See Taylor, forthcoming [Deer].

ending, with variation between *pett* and **pettan* or **peitten* as expressed in the variation between Latin *villa* and *villula* (for which see above).²⁴ However, a further possibility exists, which might explain the medial syllable as a definite article after all, for which see the discussion of the name Mochan, below. This analysis of **Pit(ten)mochan* must of necessity remain unresolved, and is a good reminder of the fact that place-names cannot be treated as static, one-dimensional entities: at different times, and in the minds of different name-users, different perceptions and interpretations applied, which in turn affected phonology and syntax.

There remains the problem of the relationship between the names **Pittenmochan* and Portmoak, the name of the parish as well as of the estate on the north side of the Leven. I will discuss this, too, under the name Mochan, below.

Moneloccodhan This name occurs as the marsh of (marresium de) *Monlochty* in 1395 *St A. Lib.* 3, and as *Bog Lochty* on Blaeu (Gordon) Fife (1654), where it is depicted as a loch. The first element is Gaelic *mòine* ‘moss, bog’ followed by the burn-name ‘Lochty’. Its transformation into Boglochty, which took place after 1395, kept the Gaelic word-order, and simply substituted the Scots *bog*, itself a loan-word from Gaelic. For more details see Taylor 2006, under Boglochty.

This area was obviously still a cause of dispute in 1395, when some of the most important personages in the realm, including the duke of Albany and the bishops of St Andrews and Caithness, waded through this same bog to settle a boundary-dispute between Kirkness and Kinninmonth, Kinglassie (*St A. Lib.* 2–5). This reminds us just how important a resource mosses and bogs were, supplying such materials as peat for fuel, divots for agriculture and building, and reeds for thatching.

Latin *strata* usually implies a paved road, and this no doubt relates to some kind of causeway over the marshy ground between Scotlandwell and Kirkness. It is marked on Blaeu (Gordon) Fife as *The gullet cawsey*. In 1621 ‘the passage at the *Guillettis* at the east end and mouthe of *Leavin*’ was described as a ‘commoun and ordinar passage betuix *St Johnnestoun*

²⁴ Such a diminutive may also underlie some other *Pit*-names with an unstressed medial syllable, such as Pittencrieff (twice FIF), Pittenweem FIF, Pittencleroch Pittensorn PER, and the many places called Pittendreich, one of which is in the northern part of Portmoak, the only *Pit*-name to have survived in the parish.

[Perth] and *Edinburgh*', but it had become so 'worne and decayit that it is become unpassible for men or horsse' (*RPC* xii pp. 496–7). That there was a crossing here much earlier is shown by the reference from 1225 × 1236 to the Hospice of St Mary of Scotlandwell beside the bridge of Loch Leven (iuxta pontem de *Lochlevyn*) (*St A. Lib.* 176). The original crossing must have been near Old Gullet Bridge.

Inverkeithing lies sixteen kilometres to the south, where there would have been a ferry across the Firth of Forth. That the road south should be so defined suggests that it was an important place over a hundred years before it is first mentioned as a ferry port (1150 × 1152 *David I Chrs.* no. 172) and a royal burgh (1161 × 1164 *RRS* i no. 232). It was important enough for the canons of Scone Abbey to receive a house there from Alexander I in their foundation charter c.1114 (*Scone Lib.* no. 1).

From this description the Rock of the Irishmen must have lain on the eastern march of the lands of Kirkness, which runs through Kirkness Woods. This is a well-established boundary, being not only that between Kirkness and Balbedie, but also between the parishes of Portmoak and Kinglassie (formerly Ballingry detached), and, from 1685, when Portmoak became part of Kinross-shire, between Kinross-shire and Fife. In Kirkness Woods are six boundary-stones. Five are well-dressed stones c.0.65 metre high, clearly erected within the last 200 years, four of them having the letter K (for Kirkness) incised on their west-facing side, and the letter B (for Balbedie) east-facing. The sixth stone, however, is quite different (NT189996): it is an undressed piece of whinstone broader and higher than the others (c.1 metre high). This is the most likely candidate for the Rock of the Irishmen.²⁵ (Illus. 64).

King Malcolm son of Duncan. As it stands this is Mael Coluim III, successor of King Macbethad (1058–93). The implications of this anachronism are discussed below.

The Medieval Latin *salinagium* is, according to *MLWL* s.v., restricted to Scotland, and first occurs in the fifteenth-century, which makes this the earliest occurrence of the word. It tentatively assigns to it the meaning

²⁵ I am grateful to local historian, the late Mr Edward Henderson, for his help in identifying the Rock of the Irishman. This identification is to be preferred to that which I made in Taylor 1995, 147 footnote 6.

‘salt-works, salt-house, salt-pan’. The Gaelic word which appears to gloss *salinagium* is *chonnane*.²⁶ However, it might just possibly be read as the name of the place where the salt-pan was situated.²⁷

The usual word for salt-pan in twelfth-century Scottish charters is *salina* (see, for example, *ESC* nos. 92, 153, 154). It once occurs as *salinaria* (*ibid.* no. 149), which is wholly synonymous, as the same salt-pan is referred to in a confirmation charter of King Malcolm IV as *salina* (*RRS* i no. 109). It is clear from these grants, mainly royal, to the major monasteries that salt-making was an important and lucrative industry by David I’s reign. Fergus Kelly, while stressing the importance of salt in early medieval Ireland, states that there are no references to Irish salt-mines or salt-pans in pre-Norman texts. Apart from imports, he suggests that in the pre-Norman period most salt was obtained by burning seaweed and other shore vegetation then boiling up the resultant ash with water (1997, 340–2).²⁸ There is in fact no way that salt could have been produced in the immediate vicinity of Loch Leven.²⁹ However, the text does not actually state that the *salinagium* was at Kirkness, and we know from the description of the western march that there was a direct road to the coast from Kirkness to Inverkeithing. If these Irishmen were indeed linked to salt-production, it is most likely that they were also in the business of food preservation and trade.

Mochan, although not common, is an attested Irish name: for example The Annals of the Four Masters, s.a. 953, record that Inderghe son of Mochán, lord of Cianacht, was killed amongst the men of Connacht in pursuit of Congelach son of Mael Mithig;³⁰ in the twelfth-century Book of Leinster 317c, at the end of the Uí Felmeda genealogy,

²⁶ Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (pers. comm.) suggests that *chonnane* may be connected with Gaelic *cuinneag* ‘(milk-)pail’, or even, through scribal error, may represent an original **chomane* for *cum(m)ain*, ‘small container, basket’, attested forms of which include *com(m)ain*, *cumin*, *cumín*, etc., see *DIL* under *cummain*.

²⁷ cf *illam quartariam terre de Fynvoych que scotice dicitur Blarvotych* ‘that quarter of the land of Finnich (Drymen STL), which in Gaelic is called *Blarvotych*’ (c.1270 × 1292 *Lenn. Cart.* 45). There is no suggestion here that the phrase ‘que scotice dicitur’ indicates translation.

²⁸ Early Norwegian law refers to black salt (*svartasalt*) produced by burning seaweed, and used for cattle licks (Kelly 1997, 341, footnote 184).

²⁹ Henderson mentions salt-works at nearby Kinglassie in the seventeenth century, but I have been unable to find out more about this (1988, 217, 295).

³⁰ ‘Inderghe mac Mocháin, tighearna Ciannachta, do mharbhadh i c-Connachtaibh h-i lurcc Chonghalaigh mic Maoil Mithigh.’

stands 'Fiachrach mac Mochain mac Seigine mac Branduib';³¹ and in the Annals of Connacht several prominent Connacht churchmen between 1361 and 1471 have the family name Uí Mocha(i)n.³² Still predominantly a Connacht name, it is Englished as O Mohan, Mahon and Moan (MacLysaght 1985, 218).

The name would appear to be a diminutive of *Moch,³³ which does not seem to be attested as a name in Ireland. However, the most senior and experienced of the three judges appointed to hear the case between Robert and Lochleven (L11) was Dougal (Dufgal) son of Mocche. Given the relative rarity of this name in Irish sources, and given that two forms of this name occur in documents relating to the same place in eastern Scotland, the name might possibly be of Pictish origin, perhaps related to W *moch* 'swine'. While Moc(c)he father of Dougal is probably not the same person as the Mochan (although this cannot be ruled out), it does seem to point to a strong local naming tradition.

This local naming tradition may in fact be rooted in a local saint's cult. The relationship between 'Mochan' and the second element of Portmoak is complex. Early forms of the latter are *Portemuoch* 1152 × 1159 *St A. Lib.* 43; *Porthmoach* 1160 × 1162 *St A. Lib.* 131; *Porthmoach* 1165 × 1169 *St A. Lib.* 143; *Portmohoc* 1179 × 1184 *St A. Lib.* 145; *Portmohoch* 1225 × 1236 *St A. Lib.* 176), while in July 1243 Bishop David of St Andrews dedicated the church of *Pormuoch*, whose patrons were St Stephen the martyr and St Moanus confessor (*St A. Lib.* 348).³⁴ St Moanus is clearly the older, local dedication, but his identity is obscure. W. J. Watson suggests that the second element of Portmoak derives from Maedhoc, a hypocoristic form of Aedh (1926, 328), but this same name has become St Madoes PER: the lack of a medial dental even in the earliest forms of Portmoak rules this out. Watson makes no reference to the patron saint Moanus, but it is probable that the two are connected, both Moanus and early forms such as *-muoch*, *moach*, *mohoch*

³¹ CGH 354. This reading is to be preferred over the fifteenth-century Book of Ballymote's *Nochain* for *Mochain*.

³² The first and last of these sources are taken from the Corpus of Electronic Texts (CELT) <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/> (June 2005).

³³ Possibly related to Old Irish *mocha* 'early' (referring to a premature birth?); or to *mochen/mochin*, 'fortunate, lucky, blessed' (see *DIL*).

³⁴ The first element is Gaelic *port* 'harbour', and refers to the position of the medieval parish kirk, which was beside the harbour on the shore opposite St Serf's Island (NO173008).

strongly indicating a disyllable.³⁵ Furthermore I would suggest that Mochan and *-muoch*, *moach* etc. are sufficiently similar as to represent ultimately the same name. Gaelic personal names are especially prone to develop hypocorisms, that is forms of endearment, most of which do not follow standard sound-changes, thus accounting for the range of variation Mochan/Moan-us/Moak. This does not of course mean that St Moanus was the same person as Mochan, although some kind of linguistic relationship is likely. The key to this problem may lie in a suggestion made by Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (pers. comm.), that the root of the name underlying both Moanus and Mochan might be Old Irish *mug(h)/mog(h)* ‘slave, serf’, found in such expressions as *mog Dé* ‘servant of God, hermit, etc.’, and would thus represent a direct allusion to the name Serf, the Latinised form of which, *Servanus*, means ‘little servant’. If this is the case, or even if the name had been re-interpreted with this in mind, it might also account for the two forms of *Pittenmochan and *Pitmochan, with and without the medial syllable, discussed under that name, above: in the former the specific element would be regarded by the name-user as deriving from the common noun ‘slave, servant’, either in the singular or the plural, with the appropriate definite article; in the latter it would be regarded as a personal name.

Mochan’s burning of his mother along with his enemies is reminiscent of the Old Irish tale *Orgain Denna Ríg* (‘The Destruction of Dind Ríg’), which culminates in the burning to death in an iron house by Labraid, son of Aillil, of his great-uncle Cobthach to avenge Cobthach’s murder of both Labraid’s father and grand-father, Loegaire. Labraid’s mother is burnt to death in the house along with Cobthach. However, unlike the case of Mochan’s mother, her death is portrayed as an act of self-sacrifice in order to encompass Cobthach’s death, rather than an attempt to protect the enemies of her son.³⁶ Burning people in houses is, of course, a common theme in both Irish and Norse literature.

³⁵ That there was a genuine cult of St Moan-us at Portmoak is suggested by the form of the name. If the saint was simply a back-formation from the place-name Portmoak, it would surely have survived as *Moacus or the like. St Moach, one of the abbot saints in the Dunkeld Litany, seems to represent just such a back-formation (Forbes, *Kalendars*, lix). See also *ibid.* p. 400 under Moanus.

³⁶ I am grateful to Kelly Fitzgerald for drawing my attention to this tale, a translation of which can be found on <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/T302012A.html>.

The name 'Kirkness'

This name would appear to be at least as old as the mid eleventh century, which makes it by far the earliest Germanic place-name recorded in Fife.³⁷ Early forms are predominantly *Kyrkenes*. The name means 'church-promontory' or 'church-ness', the eponymous kirk being that of St Serf's on nearby St Serf's Island. The name could be either Older Scots or Old Norse: both languages are related, and, by the eleventh century, in an insular context, have also mutually influenced one another, especially in northern England, which was one of the two main source-areas for Older Scots (the other source-area being Lothian). Both languages had the element *næss/nes(s)* 'headland, promontory', and within a Scots context it was especially productive in coastal names.³⁸ Along the West Lothian shore of the Forth an especially early example, which could be either Older Scots or even Old English (Old Northumbrian), is the settlement-name Blackness (*Blackenis* 1165 × 1214, *Blakenes* 1301).³⁹ As far as I am aware Kirkness is unique in mainland Scotland in that the eponymous ness is not coastal. It does not even refer to a promontory in Loch Leven itself, but rather to the low ridge of land with the flood-plain of the Leven to the north and the large moss of Boglochty (for which see above) to the south. This corresponds closely to one of the meanings given by Smith 1956 under Old English *næss* 'a piece of land round which a river flows to form a headland'.⁴⁰

³⁷ It is perhaps more than a co-incidence that the next Germanic place-name on record in Fife, also very early, shares a boundary with Kirkness. This is Goatmilk(shire) (schiram de *Gatmilk*, *Dunf. Reg.* no. 1), one of the lands given to the church of Dunfermline by Alexander I (1107-24). Goatmilkshire was co-extensive with Kinglassie parish. Although the form in which it is first recorded is Older Scots, given its proximity to Kirkness the possibility exists that it is an adaptation of a Norse name containing the same elements (*geit* 'she-goat' and *mjólk* 'milk'). For more details see Taylor, 2006 s.n.

³⁸ There are approximately 11 along the Fife coast, the earliest recorded being Fife Ness (*Fiffisness* 1498 *RSS* i no. 286). None has developed into a settlement-name, suggesting relatively late formation.

³⁹ Bo'ness WLO, from Burrowstounness, is a secondary development from a place (relief feature or settlement?) called simply (The) *Nes* from 1494 onwards. For details of this and Blackness see MacDonald 1941. In a Norse context attention should be drawn to nearby coastal Bridgeness WLO (lie *Brigneis* 1643 *RMS* ix no. 1440, where it is described as a harbour (*portus*)), which MacDonald suggests contains ON *bryggja* 'landing-place' (*ibid.* 28). Neither *DOST* or *SND* records this meaning of *brygg* in Scots, but *SND Supplement* does record Sc *brigg* 'a long, low ridge of sea-rocks', especially common on the east coast.

⁴⁰ While this would seem to be an Old English usage, Smith 1956 under Old Norse *nes* 'a headland, a promontory' adds 'used in the same way as OE *næss*'.

However, it should be pointed out that no such compound exists in England. Its nearest parallels are in the Northern Isles: at least two on Orkney and three on Shetland (both Kirk Ness and Kirka Ness). All are coastal except for Kirkness, a farm on a low broad headland (Kirk Ness) at the north end of the Loch of Harray, Orkney Mainland.⁴¹ All these can safely be assigned to a Norse-language context. And in the wider Scandinavian world we have, for example, Kirkenes in northern Norway. On balance, therefore, the evidence points to a Norse context also for Kirkness by Loch Leven.

Who were the Hibernienses?

It is to be regretted that we do not have the Gaelic which underlies the Latin translation's *hibernenses*, though it is most likely *érennach* (modern Gaelic *Éireannach*). It has to be said that I have found no instance of either of these words referring specifically to Hiberno-Norse:⁴² it is the name Kirkness which is my chief piece of evidence for the suggestion that the Irishmen of L2 were Hiberno-Norse rather than Hiberno-Gaels. By Hiberno-Norse I mean Norse-speakers who had, or at least who were perceived by the compiler of the text to have, close links to Norse settlements in Ireland, the most important of which was Dublin. Kirkness is not the only toponymic trace which the Norse have left in east central Scotland, the most obvious being the scatter of settlement-names containing the element *bý(r)* 'farm, settlement', such as Humbie ELO, FIF, LAN, MLO, WLO and Busbie or Busby AYR, LAN, PER. I have discussed these at some length, in a Fife context in Taylor 1995, and in a broader central and southern Scottish context in Taylor 2004. Here I suggest that the period for their formation which best fits the evidence is the tenth century, at a time when close political and cultural ties existed between the kings of Alba and alliances of Norse centred on Dublin and York.⁴³ I further suggest that the settlement of Norse-speakers within the context of a southward-expanding kingdom of

⁴¹ For a survey of *ness*-names in the Northern Isles, see Waugh, forthcoming. I am grateful to Doreen Waugh for showing me a pre-publication version of this article.

⁴² For example, a note written in 1072, partly in Irish, partly in Latin, clearly uses *hibernensis* to refer to Gaelic-speaking Irishmen, either an equivalent to, or a sub-group of, the *Scoti* (Codex Palatino-Vaticanus, no. 830, for which see Ó Cuív 1990, 50–1). I am grateful to Dáibhí Ó Cróinín for drawing my attention to this reference.

⁴³ I have set out the evidence for this most fully in Taylor 1995, 144–7.

the Scots (Alba) was countenanced and even encouraged by the king (Taylor 2004, 133–6).

This brings us to the vexed question of the identity of the king mentioned in L2 who introduced the Irishmen to the Kirkness area. The text reads *Malcolmus filius Duncani*, Malcolm son of Duncan (Mael Coluim mac Donnada), that is Malcolm III, who died 1093. This creates what might be seen as an anachronism in the text, since Malcolm III is Macbethad's successor, and therefore can scarcely have been involved in a process which gave rise to a name defining a piece of land granted by Macbethad and his queen. I have argued elsewhere that the original Gaelic text may have had **Mael Coluim mac Domnaill*, thus referring to King Malcolm I (son of Donald) who reigned 943–54. It would then be a case of the translator or later copier substituting a more familiar king for a less familiar one, unaware or careless of the anachronism he was thus creating. This identification with Malcolm I would have the further advantage of placing the arrival of Hiberno-Norse in the plausible historical frame-work I have already alluded to.

While this is historically satisfying, especially for those like myself subscribing to a tenth-century context for Norse naming in southern and central Scotland in general, I also recognise the danger of circularity in this argumentation. As stated at the outset, the main purpose of this text is to assert property rights in a dispute of the 1120s. Therefore the names defining the property in question are primarily those which have resonance for the 1120s, not for the mid-eleventh century, and certainly not for the tenth. It could even be argued that the land was not called Kirkness when it was granted to Lochleven by Macbethad and Gruoch, although I think that is being unnecessarily cautious, especially as it is mentioned again in L6 relating to the 1090s (see above). However, it is certainly not impossible that a name for a boundary-marker contemporary with (and crucial to) the 1120s was retrospectively inserted into a text recording a grant of the mid eleventh century.

There are one or two fixed points in all this morass of uncertainty: one is the name Kirkness itself; the other is that in Fothrif (west Fife and immediately adjacent lands) in the 1120s at the latest it was perfectly plausible to invoke a model of small-scale settlement from Ireland, royally sanctioned, and accompanied by considerable local hostility. Being able to date the historical context of these two items would greatly enhance our understanding of pre-twelfth-century east central Scotland, but by the very nature of our source we are denied this date, and therefore this understanding. However, the recent identification

by Mark Hall of an arrow-head found on St Serf's Island in 1922 as being of probable Scandinavian origin, and of the tenth or eleventh century, offers a dramatic and exciting new twist to the tale (see Hall this volume), and shows that the case of the Rock of the Irishmen is still far from closed.

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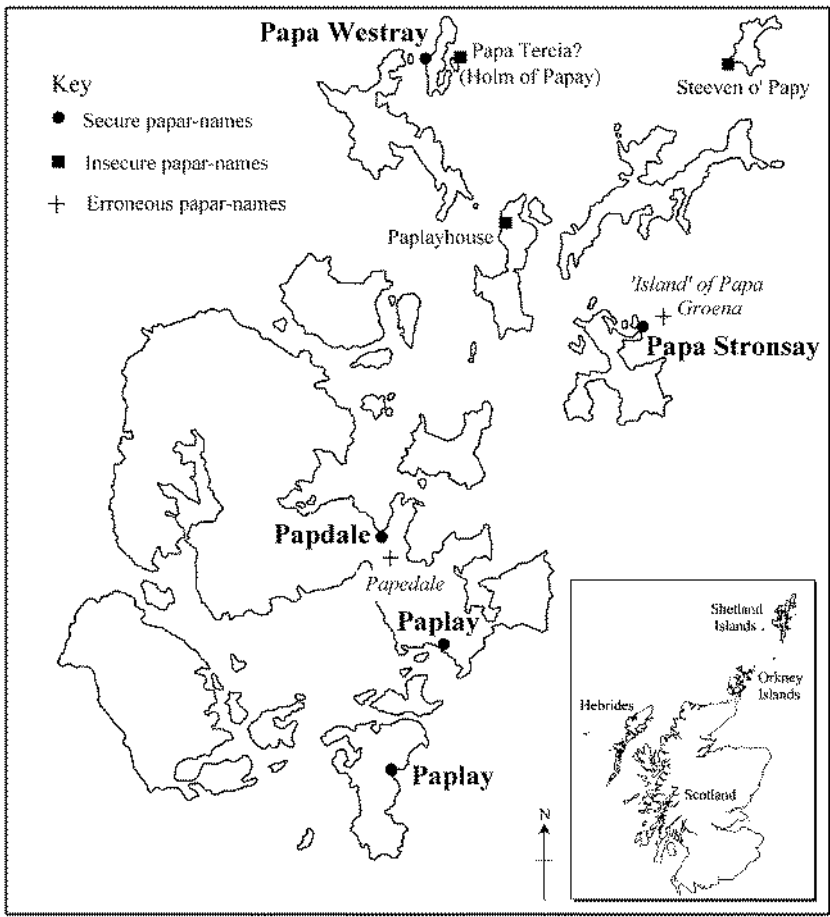
THE ORKNEY *PAPAR*-NAMES

William P. L. Thomson

The Papar Project which Barbara Crawford directs has involved an exhaustive and no doubt exhausting study of the places in the Northern and Western Isles which contain the element *papar*, the name given by the Norse to the clerics of the pre-Norse Church (*Papar* Project). It is a daunting undertaking, not just because it involves the investigation of thirty or more sites scattered through some 300 miles of stormy seas, but also because it requires the bringing together of a mass of evidence from such diverse disciplines as place-names, history, archaeology, and soil science. Some of this evidence presents such intractable problems that she has recently posed the very basic question: were these clerics a real feature of the Viking Age, or were they a twelfth century myth? (Crawford 2005).

My paper is more limited in its scope but is intended to contribute to this study by looking at some aspects of the eight Orkney places which contain this *papar* element (Illus. 65).¹ Besides the problem of deciding the proportions of eighth century reality and twelfth century myth there are two further questions which have to be addressed: first, what kind of clerics were they? Were the *papar* hermits, or monastic, or missionary, or pastoral? Second, what was the relationship of these clerics to Norse settlers? Does the evidence point to extermination or continuity? A confident answer is possible to the first of these questions: the Orkney *papar*-places were bigger, better and generally more important than people sometimes imagine, so the *papar* are likely to have been clergy living in places where they were associated with secular communities rather than hermits seeking isolation. The question of continuity is not so easy, but Norse Christians seem to have had little empathy with the Pictish Church and were separated from their

¹ Blaeu's *Atlas Novus* (1654) shows another *Papedale* immediately east of Scapa (c.HY4408), but this is a duplication, not an additional site. Another name to discount is the 'island' of Papa Groena listed by George Low (Olaf Cuthbert ed. 2001, 12). It is not an island but an underwater shoal northeast of Papa Stronsay (*grunn* = shoal).



Illus. 65 Map of Orkney Papar-sites. Papa Westray, Papa Stronsay, Papdale, Paplay (Holm) and Paplay (South Ronaldsay) are secure sites. Paplayhouse and the Steeven o'Papy are insecure because the name may not derive from '*papar*' and Papa Tercia because its location is unknown. Papedale is an erroneous name occurring as a duplication on Blaeu's map, and Papa Groena is a shoal wrongly identified as an island by George Low.

predecessors by a gulf of ignorance which is difficult to reconcile with an unbroken Christian tradition.

The sites

Five of the eight Orkney *papar*-names seem secure, Papdale, Paplay (Holm), Paplay (South Ronaldsay), Papa Westray and Papa Stronsay. The connection between these *papar*-names and the pre-Norse Church is supported by archaeology including finds of sculpture in Papa Westray, Papa Stronsay, Paplay (South Ronaldsay) and possibly Paplay (Holm), and missing only at Papdale (Kirkwall) where nearly a thousand years of urban development obscures the site. Finds are not numerous but the evidence is enough to establish some kind of link between these *papar*-names and the pre-Norse Church. The other three names are for various reasons less certain. The present occupant of Paplayhouse in Eday tells me that the name was first recorded in the early nineteenth century and that the surname 'Paplay' was also found on the island as early as 1719. Paplayhouse might therefore be similar to some other Eday names where a surname is combined with 'house'. The Steeven o' Papy, North Ronaldsay; it is an off-shore rock where the derivation from *papar* is again uncertain; *pobi*-names occur as coastal names in Shetland and, although Jakob Jakobsen believed they derived from *papar*, he also recorded *pobi* as a fishermen's taboo term for a pap or a projecting topographic feature (Jakobsen 1936, 172–174; Jakobsen 1928/1932, 2, 662–663). Names with this meaning are also found in Norway where 'Papper' occurs as a farm-name (Rygh 1897 1, 265) and it has recently been suggested that some of the Icelandic names traditionally accepted as deriving from *papar* are the result of their breast-like topography rather than the former presence of clerics (Sigurdsson 2005). The remaining doubtful *papar*-name is *Papay Tercia* ('a third *papar* island') which is listed in *Scotichronicon* (mid-fourteenth century) but is otherwise unknown (Bower 2, 192–195). Since this list is quite detailed, most of the islands which might otherwise be identified as *Papay Tercia* such as Eynhallow and the Green Holm can be eliminated. Perhaps *Papay Tercia* was the Holm of Papay—not a separate *papar*-site but a holm subsidiary to Papa Westray.

Discussion needs to be based as far as possible on the secure sites: if the name is insecure, so is the information derived from it. All five secure places are associated with good agricultural land (Land Use Capability

classes 3 and 4: Orkney's highest and second-highest categories),² and there is a tendency to favour coastal sites with sandy, well-drained soils (Papa Westray, Papa Stronsay and Paplay, South Ronaldsay). Before the introduction of heavy ploughs and modern sub-soil drainage these light soils were even more valuable. On the sandy links which the Norse called *noltland* ('cattle land') it was also possible to take cattle outdoors during much of the winter as is still done today, but these grazings were of greater comparative value when modern fodder crops were lacking and even bog hay was scarce. The following favourable comments were all made by parish ministers at a time when pre-modern agriculture still prevailed:

(Papa Westray) is a very fertile island, containing some of the best pasture and arable lands in the whole country; and, to appearance, there is a greater proportion of this island under cultivation than that of the island of Westray (*OSA* Westray).

(Papa Stronsay)...lying flat with corn fields which have been stimulated by plenty of ware to raise luxuriant crops...(*OSA* Stronsay).

(Paplay, South Ronaldsay)...a most beautiful vale, with the ocean on one side, and gently declining hills on the other which, for the production of every beneficial crop, is far superior to any other part of the island (Barry 1808, 43).

(Paplay, Holm) Of this name for the site of a church and manse, there are instances in other Orkney parishes. The Paplays are always the most fertile spots of a parish... .(*NSA* 1842, 226).

Comments of this kind were repeated so often that they are probably not entirely independent but stem from a collective understanding among Orkney ministers that a *papar*-name was likely to indicate a fertile place, an opinion perhaps originating from the historian, George Barry, or some other antiquarian-minded minister (Barry 1808, 115). Parish ministers praise all the secure sites with the exception of Papdale where we hardly need their comments: the parish of St Ola within which Papdale is centrally situated is Orkney's largest continuous block of Class 3 land in terms of Land Use Capability (Orkney's highest

² Soils are mapped by the Soil Survey of Scotland on a scale of 1:50000 in two series (1) Soil (2) Land Use Capability (MacAulay Institute of Soil Research). There is a related booklet, F. T. Dry and A. H. Sinclair, *The Soils of Orkney*, 1985. Note that the Orkney Land Use Capability categories are not directly comparable to those used in areas which were mapped on a smaller scale. Coastal zones, including recent land use, are well described in Mather, Smith and Ritchie 1974, 133–9.

category) and it occupied a central location in relation to the rest of Orkney even before there was any urban development. Papdale is now a district within Kirkwall, but the name properly applies to a little valley which enters the sea in the oldest part of the town where St Olaf's, the town's first Norse church, was built.

Landownership

We do not know how big the Orkney estates of the Pictish Church are likely to have been, but it seems improbable that any of the sites except Papa Stronsay could have been inhabited exclusively by clergy, or indeed totally owned by them. Papa Westray is $4\frac{1}{4}$ miles in length compared to Iona's $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles and its arable land is greater in area and of better quality, so it would have been a remarkably generous gift if the whole island had been handed over to the Pictish Church; a more cautious view might envisage that the *papar* settlement (if the name really implies the existence of a communal settlement) did not encompass the whole island. The central location of Papdale shows that in this case the *papar* were deliberately seeking a secular environment consistent with missionary and pastoral activity rather than monastic or eremitic isolation. A degree of seclusion is implied in Papa Westray and Papa Stronsay, insofar as both are subsidiary to the larger islands of Westray and Stronsay, but both were less peripheral than our modern land-orientated view of communications might suppose. Both have ready access to their parent-island, they commanded busy sea-routes, have good harbours and were within easy reach of prolific fishing grounds.

Although reliable information about ownership only becomes available at the end of the Middle Ages, Hugh Marwick believed that *papar*-sites might have been in the possession of the Church in earlier times. He noted that in Papa Westray there was an absence of the place-name generics *garðr*, *staðir*, *bær* and *bólstaðr*, which he thought could identify early Norse settlement, and he drew the conclusion that the Vikings had left the pre-Norse clergy 'for the most part undisturbed' (Marwick 1925, 32–3, 36–7). Vikings seldom left churches undisturbed, but there are more cogent reasons to question Marwick's argument. Papa Westray is a small island so he was actually basing his conclusions on a quite limited number of habitative names, yet his list does

contain other names which he believed were early. In any case there is no part of Orkney where we find all the farm-name generics which Marwick used to construct his 'chronology' and, even when several are present, their use to date settlement has its pitfalls (Marwick 1952, 227–251; Thomson 1995). Moreover there is the usual absence of pre-Norse names in Papa Westray, although we might have expected some to survive had the *papar* provided continuity through the Viking Age. Marwick also argued in favour of continuity on Papa Stronsay on the basis of *Orkneyinga saga*'s story that Earl Rognvald Brusisson was mistaken for 'a deacon' when he escaped from Thorfinn before being caught and killed among the rocks on the shore (Illus. 66). Marwick thought that, if the sudden appearance of a deacon was unsurprising, this might be evidence that 'there were Celtic Papae still living on the island' (Marwick 1927, 66). However, Papa Stronsay was earldom property when information about ownership first becomes available and, since Rognvald had gone there to collect his Yule malt, it is more likely that in 1046 the island belonged to him rather than to the *papar*. Marwick's arguments in favour of continuing occupancy in Papa Westray and Papa Stronsay are not compelling.

As the Middle Ages drew to a close only Paplayhouse (Eday) was entirely owned by the Church, and the parish of St Ola, which contained Papdale, was the only secure *papar*-site with a significant amount of church land. Eday, however, became church property only shortly before the Reformation (Clouston 1927, 292–293) and the church estates in St Ola probably date from the twelfth-century endowment of St Magnus Cathedral. We can say quite categorically that there is no link between the *papar* and the estates of the late medieval Church.

Although the *papar*-names are unconnected with church estates, they are found in an unmistakable relationship to land which belonged to the Norse earls. The clearest example is Paplay (now more commonly known as East Holm) which comprises about a square mile of well drained, south-facing Class 3 land which is noted for its early crop. Apparently Paplay was once a parish in its own right, and it contains the place-names Skaill (hall), Bu (big farm) and Grange, all of which are indicative of high status settlement. *Orkneyinga saga* describes the circumstances whereby the estate of Paplay was detached from the earldom by King Magnús *berfættr* ('Barelegs') when he conquered Orkney in 1098, and given as a dowry to Gunnhild on the occasion of her marriage to Kol Kalisson (*Orkneyinga Saga*, c.42). It seems that Norse

Paplay had originally been two *urislands* or ouncelands (36 pennylands),³ of which one *urisland* was *bordland*, a term used to denote demesne attached to a principal residence of the earls of Orkney. The other half of the property consisted of about 20 very small farms (*umbesetts*) designed to accommodate followers and to provide a pool of labour. In 1492 Paplay was still under single ownership with the structure of the medieval manor to some extent still visible, although portions of the former demesne had been redistributed to augment the satellite farms. Other *papar*-sites are similarly associated with the earldom: Papa Stronsay was entirely the property of the earls, and Kirkwall (Papdale) was a frequent residence at least from the eleventh century; the greater part of Papa Westray was earldom land (41½ pennylands = c.69%) and the fact that Rognvald Brusisson was taken to the island for burial suggests a special connection with the family of the earls. In addition to these Orkney sites, another place with a *papar*-name which was a prestige secular property is Papa Stour, Shetland, which in 1299 contained a great farm belonging to Duke Håkon who that year became King Håkon V of Norway (Crawford 2002a).

One possibility is that the earls owned most of the Orkney places with *papar*-names because at some point their heathen ancestors confiscated huge estates belonging to the Pictish Church as Lamb suggested (Lamb 1995, 25), but that is not the only possible explanation, or even the most likely one. The *papar* need not have owned the places where they lived: the Norse earls may have taken over important secular Pictish estates on which *papar* had been resident. The advantages of a close association between a chief and missionary clergy are well known: the chief could make use of the skills of literate clergy, his rule was legitimised by their presence, and at the same time he could keep an eye on their activities, while in turn the Church's evangelising ministry was also legitimised, and it was well placed to enjoy protection and exercise influence. This is what we might expect in the Pictish conversion period, and it is exactly the pattern we later find when Orkney became Christian for a second time and many Norse churches were built immediately adjacent to the halls of chiefs. A prime example is at Birsay where Earl Thorfinn

³ This total excludes Ocklester which was not originally part of the parish. By 1492 an extra pennyland had appeared, perhaps as a result of confusion, giving Paplay a total of 37 pennylands.

installed the first Norse bishop in Christchurch, not on an independent estate, but close to his own residence (*Orkneyinga Saga*, c.31).

Hermits

Orkney also had hermits. The first report concerns St Ailbe, an early sixth-century Irish bishop, who expressed the desire 'to flee from men... and to sail to Thule set in the Ocean that he might live alone with God' (Radford 1983, 14). We do not know what Ailbe meant by 'Thule', and in any case he was prevented from making his journey, but his intention marks the start of a long tradition of northward voyages to Orkney, Shetland, Faroe and Iceland. One such hermit was Columba's friend Cormac Ua Liatháin who is said to have sailed to Orkney seeking a 'desert place in the ocean' (Adomnán, 167). Brei Holm, a cliff-top sea-stack off Papa Stour, Shetland, has produced a carbon date of between 430 and 670 AD which is consistent with these traditions (Brady 2002, 69–82). The voyages of the hermits are usually thought to have come to an end c.800 AD when, according to Dicuil, Vikings drove away hermits from islands which seem certain to have been Faroe, but a date from the Kame of Isbister, Shetland, of 865 ± 80 AD, combined with building techniques which are thought to be Norse, suggests the eremitic tradition may not have ended quite so abruptly. We are told that Cormac's life was in danger from hostile Orcadians, but local support or at least benevolent neutrality must have been needed at the extreme sites where hermits perched on exposed sea-stacks and sheer promontories in imitation of the 'stylites' who spent years in prayer on the top of precipitous columns in the Syrian desert. By the eighth century the Orkney Church might have sustained its own hermits from home bases, but no Orkney hermit site has a *papar*-name—these were given to places likely to have been the home bases. Lamb was obviously right when he concluded that the eremitic sites were either completely separate from, or else an off-shoot of, the missionary activity associated with the places with *papar*-names (Lamb 1973, 85).

Antiquarian dedications I: Ninian and Laurence

It seems that the Norse, as well as applying *papar*-names to pre-Norse church sites, also searched for appropriate early saints who, often mistakenly, they thought might have been active in the area. The result

is that *papar*-names and pre-Norse chapels are often accompanied by what may be described as ‘antiquarian dedications’. In the case of these dedications we are not so much concerned with the real dates of the saints as with identifying periods when their lives were written and their cults flourished.

The clearest example is the chain of Ninian sites in Easter Ross, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland. At one time the view that these names traced the route of a real mission by Ninian c.400 AD was enthusiastically propounded by A. B. Scott and W. Douglas Simpson (Scott 1912; Scott 1916; Simpson 1940), but the arrival of the saint’s cult in the far north was probably 700 or more years later, perhaps stimulated by the *Vita Niniani* attributed to Ailred of Rievaulx which was written c.1160 (MacQueen 1990). Since there are no Ninian-dedications anywhere in Scotland known to be earlier than the twelfth century, and since ‘Ninian’ is likewise never found in early forms of ecclesiastical place-names (Clancy 2001), it is not to be expected that the dedications in Shetland, Orkney and the north of Scotland are any earlier than the twelfth century, and no doubt some of them are later.

Ailred’s *Vita Niniani* has been described as belonging to ‘a genre of myth-making’ (Macquarrie 1997, 67), and the same might be said of the dedications. In Shetland the Ninian dedication at Papil, Yell, seems designed to link a *papar*-name to his supposed mission, and a less close association is found at St Ninian’s chapel, Norby, which is situated directly across the sound from Papa Stour (*RCAMS* 3, No.1667). Furthermore St Ninian’s Isle, although not a *papar*-name, is an example of a Ninian-dedication being attributed to a genuinely pre-Norse site. In Orkney, in addition to the dubious *Rīnansey* (North Ronaldsay),⁴ there are two Ninian-dedications. The first is St Ninian’s chapel in South Ronaldsay which is associated with the name ‘Paplay’, being a subsidiary chapel situated high on the headland to the south of the district (Peterkin 1820 III, 87). The second, St Ninian’s chapel at Toab, lies within the Minehow Iron Age complex and so might have been given its dedication because the site was recognised as being very old. In Caithness the dedication to Ninian at Papigoe near Wick again links Ninian to what is ostensibly a *papar*-name, although the

⁴ North Ronaldsay is named as *Rīnansey* and *Rīnarsey* in *Orkneyinga saga* (c.1200) but it is hardly possible that an Orkney place-name could have been formed from ‘Ringan’ (the Scots form of Ninian) at such an early date.

neighbouring small hill known as ‘the Pap’ makes this derivation less than certain—perhaps the Ninian dedication was intended to re-enforce a dubious belief that Papigoe was a real *papar* site. In Sutherland a Ninian dedication is found at Navidale, a name which combines the Celtic *nemed* (‘sacred place’) and the Norse *dalr* (‘valley’). Simpson proposed that Navidale was a ‘sacred place’ because it had been the site of a Ninianic mission, but it is better to reverse his reasoning and suggest that it was given a venerable-seeming Ninian-dedication because people knew that *nemed* implied that it was an ancient holy place of some kind, possibly a pagan spring later known as St Ninian’s well (Simpson 1940; Scott 1912, 84–85; Watson 1926, 250; MacQueen 1990, 71–72). There appears to be an element of imaginative reconstruction about most of these Ninian dedications: they were not conferred at random but, like *papar*-names, were applied specifically to pre-Norse ecclesiastical sites and to the new chapels which were built at these places.

There are also dedications to St Laurence, the most significant of which is at Papil in West Burra, Shetland, where the dedication lies within a district with a *papar*-name and relates to an important head-church, where famous examples of Pictish ecclesiastical sculpture have been found (*ECMS* 2, 10–15; Fisher 2002, 53–54). There are other Laurence dedications on an apparently early site in Burray, Orkney, possibly at Yesnabie, Orkney (Fraser 1928) and at Sumburgh (Shetland) (Cant 1975, 33). Perhaps these dedications are not to Laurence, the Roman martyr, but to the seventh-century Laurence who was Augustine’s successor in Canterbury and who with little justification came to be regarded as an ‘Apostle to the Picts’. Laurence’s apocryphal travels were reputed to have taken him as far north as Laurencekirk in the Mearns, but when Bede describes how Laurence ‘endeavoured to employ his pastoral solicitude among the ancient inhabitants of Britain’, he leaves us in no doubt that ‘pastoral solicitude’ actually took the form of writing admonitory letters to native churches rather than making missionary journeys (Bede, 74). The veneration of Laurence, if he is Laurence of Canterbury, was probably stimulated by a *vita* written by Goscelin of St Bertin in which the various miracles during Laurence’s fictitious journey into northeast Scotland are described in graphic detail (written 1090 × 1100) (Macquarrie 1997, 216–218).

We can only guess why these saints appear in Orkney. It is easy to imagine how a chance encounter might play a part. For example, Earl Magnus (St Magnus) spent a year or two at the Scottish court (c.1098)

just at the time when Goscelin's *vita* of Laurence appeared with its account, not only of the saint's northern mission, but also of Queen Margaret's memorable visit to Laurencekirk where she suffered divine punishment for attempting to go into St Laurence's church which women were forbidden to enter (Macquarrie 1997, 218, 226). This incident had occurred 'recently' (Latin: *nuper*) so Magnus, like Goscelin, must have heard a first-hand or near first-hand account of this impressive display of St Laurence's power. Likewise we have no means of knowing whether the possession of relics was another chance factor, but we may suspect that the absence of relics was not an insuperable problem when politics and pseudo-historical reconstructions urged a particular choice. The primary function of both Ninian and Laurence might have been to emphasise the earliness of links with British churches as opposed to the Norwegian connection. They also had the advantage of casting the Orkney Church in a favourable light by the claim that it had such venerable antecedents, while the reputation of the saints was similarly enhanced by the assertion that their influence had extended to the extremities of the British Isles. The legends of Kentigern, Serf and Conran are other examples of fictitious Orkney missions being invented as symbols for far-flung evangelisation (Kolsrud 1913, 294; *ES* 1, 136).

Antiquarian dedications II: Boniface and Tredwell

St Boniface church and St Tredwell's chapel in Papa Westray may be other antiquarian dedications (Illus. 67). Boniface is either the English missionary to Germany, or the more obscure Boniface of the *Aberdeen Breviary* who was believed to have led a Romanising mission to Pictland for which a date *c.* 715 AD has been proposed. We can be reasonably certain that the dedication is to the second of these saints because of the dedication to St Tredwell in the same small island. Tredwell, Triduana or Tröllhæna as she appears in *Orkneyinga Saga* was, according to 'The Legend of St Boniface', a holy virgin who accompanied his Pictish mission. Boniface's identity is complicated: he was apparently one and the same as Bishop Kiritinus (Curadán) and was conflated with Pope Boniface who quite mistakenly was credited with leading a huge mission from Rome to Pictland. Boniface's activities were associated with Rosemarkie and with the founding of churches with St Peter dedications of which there are a number of early examples in Orkney. Since 'Curidán' seems to be his original name and the cognomen 'Boniface'

a later and probably erroneous accretion, the fact that the dedication takes the form 'Boniface' rather than 'Curidán' suggests that it might not be particularly early—we might suspect that it is Norse rather than genuinely Pictish (Bannatyne Club 1854; Skene 1867, 421–423; Skene 1875–2, 229–232; Henderson 1971, 50–52; Kirby 1973, 6–24; MacDonald 1994; Veitch 1994, 627–647; Lamb 1998, 41–56).

Andrew, the first Scots bishop of Caithness (c. 1153–85) and previously a monk of Dunfermline, was the source of some of the information about Pictland contained in *De Situ Albanie* (ES 1, cxvii–viii) so his antiquarian research might have included a knowledge of Boniface and Tredwell. He might also have had an interest in Laurence since the Dunfermline Benedictines were affiliated to Canterbury and seem to have promoted his cult (Clancy 1999, 83–88). We are on more certain ground with Andrew's successor in Caithness who was very directly involved with Tredwell. In 1201 Bishop John was attacked, blinded and his tongue cut out by Earl Harald Maddadsson's men, but his sight and speech were restored by a visionary appearance of Tredwell and a visit to her shrine, presumably at Restalrig (now within Edinburgh) rather than in Papa Westray (*Orkneyinga Saga*, c.111; MacIvor 1964, 247–263). It may be that it was these bishops who brought the cults north where Boniface and Tredwell, like Ninian and Laurence, could be used to assert the prior claims of the Scottish Church in the face of bitter opposition from Orkney which resented this intrusion into an area hitherto part of the Orkney bishopric (Crawford 1993, 129–147). Because of Bishop John's miraculous cure, it is not surprising that there should be Tredwell dedications in Caithness and Sutherland (Watson 1926, 334–5), but we might have expected that hostility to these incoming Scots bishops would have made it difficult for her to be immediately accepted in Orkney. At some point she became firmly established in Papa Westray where all memory of Boniface was lost apart from the dedication. Tredwell is a local variant of St Lucy, a saint given particular prominence in Nordic countries, and this affinity may have contributed to her popularity in Orkney. Like Lucy she is said to have plucked out her eyes to escape the unwelcome attentions of a secular ruler; post-humously she cured Bishop John's injured eyes, and possibly as late as 1800 pilgrimages were still being made by people from other islands seeking a cure for eye disorders. Presbyterian ministers had difficulty in preventing their parishioners circling St Tredwell's Loch and visiting the site of her chapel before coming to listen to their sermons (Brand 1883, 87; *NSA Westray*; Rendall 2002, 35).

Nicholas

Although Nicholas is not one of the antiquarian dedications, it is worth thinking about the way his dedications connect to *papar*-names. In two places there are a pair of dedications: St Nicholas was the parish church in Paplay (Holm) and on the edge of the district there was a chapel with the same dedication (*RCAHMS* 1946 2, No.373); similarly St Nicholas is the dedication for one of the Stronsay parishes and also for a chapel on Papa Stronsay. The key to understanding the Nicholas dedications is their close association with the earls: St Nicholas, Stronsay, was situated on the earl's *bordland* farm of Holland and the Round Church in Orphir (also St Nicholas) was located within the same complex of buildings as the earl's residence. The Round Church has an unusual and sophisticated plan ultimately deriving from the eastern Mediterranean and perhaps based on the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem (Wainwright 1962, 181–182; Batey 2003) so it may have been considered appropriate to dedicate it to a fashionable eastern saint. Nicholas was the bishop of Myra in Asia Minor who achieved huge posthumous popularity after men from Bari in southern Italy broke into his tomb with crowbars and hammers and removed not only the saint's corporeal remains but also the shattered fragments of his 'marble' shrine, which they carried in triumph to their home city (1087). It is possible that the cult reached Orphir by a direct route as a result of visits to Rome and Jerusalem by Earl Hakon Pálsson (c.1120) and by the crusaders, Earl Rognvald Kali Kolsson and Bishop William the Old (1151–3). An exciting idea is that it might have been one of these travellers who brought back the fragment of re-used classical green porphyry (*porfido verde antico*) discovered at St Nicholas Chapel, Papa Stronsay, which we might like to think was originally from the 'marble' cover of Nicholas tomb (Lowe 2002, 92; St Nicholas web-site; Cormack 1989; Owen and Lowe 1999, 223–225). Perhaps the Stronsay fragment was a prestigious souvenir acquired by an important Orkney visitor, and considered a suitable gift to a favourite church which was given a Nicholas dedication. Admittedly it is quite likely that the porphyry came from a different Mediterranean source, and the veneration of such a well known saint might have reached Orkney in other ways, especially since Nicholas had an appeal for travellers and seafarers. The important point, however, is that the Stronsay and Orphir churches are so closely associated with residences of the earls that the Nicholas dedications must have reflected their preferences. Since Papa Stronsay

also belonged to the earls and Paplay to their close relatives it is likely that the Nicholas dedications at these *papar*-places can also be attributed to the earls. More generally these dedications indicate a twelfth-century aristocratic interest in *papar*-sites.⁵

Historia Norvegie

The brief account of Orkney in *Historia Norvegie* states that the pre-Norse population consisted of Picts and *papar* who the author appears to believe belonged to different races (*Historia Norvegie*). The account states that the *papar* were so called because of their *albs* (white vestments) which they wore *ut clerici* ('like priests' or more probably 'as priests') and that an island, Papay (presumably Papa Westray), was named after them. It tells us that *pape* is the usual word for all clerics in the Germanic languages, and that Norse settlers found books abandoned by the *papar*. It adds that 'the appearance and letter-forms of their books show that they were Africans who adhered to Judaism'.

The extraordinary nature of this last comment disguises the fact that the *Historia* contains illuminating information, albeit of a general rather than a specific nature. First, the fact that the story of the abandoned books is also found in Iceland shows that we are probably dealing with a general tradition about the *papar* rather than a specific event firmly located in Orkney (Jóhannesson 1974, 3–11; Kristjánsson, 1998, 261). Second, the *Historia* is direct evidence that the second half of the twelfth century was a period when people were taking an interest in the *papar*, were speculating about their identity, and had already created *papar*-names. Third, it shows that ignorance of the Pictish Church was profound—so profound that we should probably resist the temptation to build theories around such details as the white *albs*, the abandoned books and the belief that the Picts and *papar* were of different races. Fourth, the *Historia* describes the *papar* in such strange terms that its Norwegian author cannot have believed there was continuity between this Pictish Church and the Norse Christianity of his own day: his informants told him that their heathen ancestors 'totally destroyed

⁵ An apparent Nicholas dedication in Papa Westray is discussed by Hugh Marwick 1925, 34 note. Marwick suggests that, when Joseph Anderson mentioned 'the churchyard of St Nicholas' in *PSAS* 11, 369, he had 'probably inadvertently written St Nicholas for St Boniface'.

these people after stripping them of their long established dwellings' so he appears to have regarded the *papar* as members of an ancient and outlandish Church which was destined to be destroyed and replaced.

It is significant that the *Historia* is not alone in its belief that the clergy of the early Church were Jews. For example, the *Aberdeen Breviary* although much later (1509–10)⁶ describes Boniface as an Israelite, and St Serf, who was also credited with evangelising Orkney, was said to be a Canaanite (Skene 1867, 412, 421). All that the author of the *Historia* intended might have been to tell us that the *papar* were associated with legends of missions from the Mediterranean of which, as well as the fictitious journey of 'Pope' Boniface, there were some real examples such as Augustine, Laurence and Theodore of Tarsus. Likewise the *Historia*'s 'Africans' were presumably the much revered Fathers of the Church in the cities of Roman North Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. Since the author knew that the Picts were neither African nor Jews, he assumed that the Picts and the priests of the early Church belonged to distinct races.

There is, however, a material difference between the pious belief that Christian Jews brought a pure form of their religion directly from the Holy Land and the *Historia*'s statement that the Orkney *papar* were *iudaismo adherentes* by which it implies that they were adherents of the Jewish religion. There is the suspicion that the author was not much concerned that he was depicting the *papar* in an unfavourable light. The term 'Jew' had negative connotations: twelfth century Norwegians were hardly anti-Semitic in a modern sense, but Jews were regarded as misguided, and a folk etymology tended to equate *gyðingr*, Jew, with *gyðniðing*, a mocker of God (*KLNM* 8, cols. 76–77). The recent editor of *Historia Norvegie* believed that its composition was linked to the founding of the archdiocese of Trondheim (1153) and she envisaged the new province resisting the claims of York and St Andrews (*Historia Norvegie* 2003, 162–8, 194). These claims, according to the contemporary English ecclesiastic, John of Salisbury, included an attempt by the Scottish king David I in 1151 to win papal approval for the inclusion of the see of Orkney in what he proposed should be a new Scottish archbishopric of St. Andrews (Chibnall 1956, 72) so it might be that

⁶ Since Tredwell was a follower of Boniface, and since she appears in *Orkneyinga saga*, it seems reasonable to suppose that traditions about Boniface were known at the time the *Historia* was written, including perhaps his supposed Jewish origin.

the inter-diocesan warfare which used Ninian, Laurence, Boniface and Tredwell as weapons to advance Scottish interests was being countered by creating the impression that the early British Church in Orkney had been in much need of replacement.

It is also worth remembering that the information for the *Historia* was collected during the long episcopate of Bishop William the Old, who was one of numerous Orcadians and Norwegians who sailed the length of the Mediterranean and visited North Africa, the Holy Land, Constantinople and Rome. On such occasions travellers might readily form opinions about the early Church, and they would soon discover that ancient books could be recognised by their distinctive 'appearance and letter-form'. Due to changes in book production and the adoption of the minuscule script, the average cleric was quite unable to read the flowing characters used in early Greek and Latin manuscripts (Brown 2003, 312).

The important point, however, is not that certain aspects of the *Historia* can be rationalised, but that the description is based on a Mediterranean model of early Christianity which draws none of its information from the real Pictish Church in Orkney, presumably because no real information was available. The *Historia* is evidence for a complete break with the past. The story of the African Jews and their Pictish neighbours is a warning that other sources such as the *papar*-place-names themselves and the dedications attached to them might also contain a good deal of uncritical conjecture.

A retrospective tradition

We see the *papar* in two different ways: some of the evidence such as the nature of the sites, archaeology and perhaps the patterns of medieval landownership point us directly towards the eighth-century reality, but *Historia Norvegie*, the dedications and possibly the *papar*-names belong to what Aidan MacDonald has described as 'a retrospective tradition' (MacDonald 2002). As well as drawing on dubious legends about early saints, we may suppose that this tradition was based partly on attempts to interpret sites where crosses and other Christian remains were discovered. It is possible that folk memories might have survived in Orkney but traditions could easily have been imported from the Hebrides, and likewise the way sites were interpreted was probably influenced by a knowledge of the monastic structure of the Columban Church. It is even possible that the habit of bestowing *papar*-names was borrowed

from the Hebrides where *papar*-sites may actually have been more hermit-like than the Orkney places where traces of Christianity were detected. Perhaps the apparent differences between the Orkney and Hebridean sites will become clearer when work on the *papar*-project is concluded. A pointer towards Irish or Hebridean origins is provided by the word *papar* itself: although *Historia Norvegie* tells us that *pape* is the usual word for clerics in the Germanic languages, Peder Gammeltoft does not believe that this was actually true at the time the *Historia* was written (Gammeltoft 2004). The term is considered to be of Irish origin, suggesting that the place-names might have reached Orkney from the south and west.

In trying to understand the *papar* we should think about the places which were not given one of these names. Was it for example fortuitous that Flotta, where we find ecclesiastical sculpture, was named 'Flotta' ('flat island') rather than 'Papay', or was there something distinctive about the places given a *papar*-name? It was of course the Norse who bestowed these names, the apparently plural form of which shows that they were thinking in terms of monasteries or groups of clergy, so a *papar*-name might have been applied to a site believed to have had a religious community rather than just a chapel served by a single priest or priests from elsewhere. The Papil stone from Shetland (Illus. 68). provides a compelling contemporary record of one such group (Henderson and Henderson 2004, 204, 245 n.19) Its members are certainly not hermits: their portly figures suggest well-fed priests or monks, and they seem to have a missionary function since they are carrying the gospel in leather satchels to preaching stations symbolised by a free-standing cross. Perhaps they have arrived from across the sea since the stylised spirals might represent breaking waves. The stone shows a procession of four figures under the leadership of a mounted bishop or abbot, but we might expect them to be a token representation of a bigger group. But is it possible that there were simultaneously 5–8 such communities in Orkney, and even more if not all *papar*-names have survived? Moreover, if we agree with Lamb that places with Peter-dedications acted as head churches,⁷ we might need to double the number of clergy, and presumably there were also priests at some other sites where Christian

⁷ Lamb 1995 and 1998. Lamb's theory that Peterkirks were Pictish head-churches leads us to expect that *papar*-names and Peter-dedications might often be linked, so it is surprising to discover that Paplay, South Ronaldsay, is actually the only place where a *papar*-name has a 'Peter' dedication.

sculpture has been found, as well as an unknown number of hermits. This implies an improbably large number of clergy in the first century or so of Christianity. Whatever the twelfth-century Norse may have believed, it is safer to regard a *papar*-name merely as an indication that a Christian presence had been detected rather than conclusive evidence for a community of clergy.

Dates and people

The discovery of pre-Norse Christian sculpture shows that the sites have an origin which genuinely dates from the Pictish period. The finds are minimal and do not at present shed much light on the nature of the Christian presence, although sculpture, particularly the elaborate examples from Papil in Shetland and Paplay in South Ronaldsay, re-enforce the impression that we are not dealing with hermits. The first records of place-names are inevitably much later: the earliest *papar*-names are in *Historia Norvegie* (possibly written c.1160–c.1175) and *Orkneyinga saga* (c.1200) but by that time the place-names had already undergone a shortening which transformed *Papaey to *Papay*, and *Papabýli to *Papuli* (Paplay). Peder Gammeltoft has pointed out that these syncope (shortening of multi-syllable words through loss of unstressed vowels) must have been the result of frequent use of the place-names over a period of time, and so the actual coining of the names must be earlier (Gammeltoft 2004, 37, 42). It does not, however, follow that the names necessarily date from the very earliest period of Viking settlement. Since names sometimes take the form ‘Papil’ which seems to derive from *ból* (usually a resting place for animals) they might have had the connotation of the ‘lair’ or ‘hiding place’ of the *papar*. It is significant that *ból* is also found in association with the Picts who were also described in strange terms in *Historia Norvegie* and who were subjected to a similar mythologising process. For example in Sanday ‘the Trow’s Buil’ (‘the troll’s lair’) is found along the course of an ancient field boundary of the kind known as a ‘picky’ (‘Pictish’) dyke, and indeed ‘Pict’ and ‘trow’ became interchangeable terms (Marwick 1922, 22; Thomson 2001, 1–2). Perhaps by the twelfth century the *papar* were also regarded as a vanished people who were so strange that they were in some danger of disappearing into a magical world.

The inclusion of Orkney, Shetland, the Hebrides, Faroe and Iceland in the new archdiocese of Trondheim (1153) may have stimulated an interest in the *papar*—these new territories mapped out the area

in which the *papar* had reputedly been active. The information from *Historia Norvegie*, probably written only a few years later, provides more certain evidence that this was indeed a period when the ‘retrospective tradition’ was actively under construction, and at much the same date the removal of St Sunniva’s relics from Selja to Bergen (1170) is also believed to have generated an interest in the legendary voyages of those seeking a desert in the northern seas (Rekdal 1998). This time-scale is consistent with the likely dates of the dedications attached to *papar*-sites since a ‘long’ twelfth century (c.1090–c.1227) seems to have seen the growth of the cults of Ninian, Laurence, Boniface, Tredwell and Nicholas. Furthermore the altars to Ninian, Laurence and Nicholas within St Magnus Cathedral provide evidence of an interest in these cults at some point after 1137 when the cathedral was founded.

Generally speaking the origins of the cults and interest in the *papar* span the period from Bishop William the Old (1102–1168) to Bishop Bjarni Kolbeinsson (1188–1223). Bishop William showed considerable adroitness in promoting the sainthood of Earl Magnus for political ends (Crawford 1998, Thomson 2003) so he might have had a hand in managing the cults of other saints. Bishop Bjarni was a cathedral-builder, a diplomat and the most distinguished of the Norse bishops—and he was also a poet. The recent translator of *Jómsvíkingadrápa* comments that Bjarni’s poem is a good example of ‘the antiquarian interests of the Norse twelfth-century renaissance’ (Jesch 1998, 42, 225–235). In the case of the *papar* ‘antiquarian interests’ are exactly what we need to find. Bjarni’s scholarly enjoyment of romantic legends was typical of a milieu likely to encourage an erudite, if somewhat fanciful curiosity about the pre-Norse Church. A similar re-working of ancient legends is a feature of some of Earl Rognvald Kolsson’s poetry, and he also has a light-hearted verse describing a group of strangely tonsured clerics (*Orkneyinga Saga*, c. 72, c. 77; Clancy 1998, 42, 191). The author of *Orkneyinga saga* was uncertain where to insert Rognvald’s verse: first he somewhat awkwardly introduces us to these clerics in Westray, then a few chapters later he apparently draws on the same information to describe a clerical delegation from David I, although he is not well informed about the bishop who led this mission. Given these uncertainties, and the improbability of finding clergy with the Celtic tonsure engaged in royal business at such a late date, we may wonder whether Rognvald’s verse properly relates to events in *Orkneyinga saga*. Was he really depicting twelfth-century clerics or just poking fun at the theory that *papar* once lived on what the verse describes as ‘this isle out west

against the storms', perhaps Papa Westray? While it is not impossible that some knowledge might have been preserved from the Viking Age, the interests exemplified by William, Bjarni and Rognvald seem to illustrate the context within which traditions about the *papar* were largely developed.

Some conclusions

We have seen that the secure *papar*-sites with pre-Norse Christian finds are mostly large, fertile and not particularly isolated. The balance of probability is that these places were not actually owned by the Church but that missionary clergy were resident on important Pictish secular estates which later fell into the hands of the Norse earls. We know very little about the *papar*, and the twelfth-century Norse were no better informed. The 'retrospective tradition' they constructed was separated by 300 to 400 years from the clerics whom they purported to describe. It is a period which in the absence of the stability provided by written records is quite long enough for the *papar* to have become rather detached from reality.

In the West Highlands and islands the memory of Celtic saints survived the Viking onslaught, but in Orkney there are no traditions of early native saints. Some dedications, particularly those to Boniface and Tredwell, have often been ascribed to the Pictish period, but there are good reasons to believe that they were bestowed retrospectively without much evidence that the saints were ever farther north than Rosemarkie. The overall impression is that all memory of pre-Norse Christianity was lost beyond recall as a consequence of overwhelming Scandinavian settlement and the destruction of the Pictish Church. In the twelfth century when the veneration of saints was so important it must have been embarrassing to have so little of a Christian past, and also frustrating when there actually was a past if only it could be understood. We can see that the somewhat nebulous concept of 'the *papar*' helped to fill this gap, but their anonymous collective identity was a poor substitute for recognisable individual saints. The Church therefore set about reconstructing a Christian history with the result that the real *papar* are obscured, not so much by deliberate fabrication as by a layer of speculation. Norse Christians identified former ecclesiastical sites and re-built chapels at long abandoned places, they took a learned interest in legends about early missions and replaced

the lost Pictish dedications with fashionable saints, particularly those who were believed to have brought Christianity northwards. It was a burst of creativity which obscures rather than illumines our view of the real eighth-century *papar*.

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PLACING *PAPA STOUR* IN CONTEXT

Doreen Waugh

The question of placing all the *papar*¹ names in context has already been intensively addressed by Barbara Crawford and her team of researchers who have contributed, and are still contributing, to the *Papar* Project, the preliminary results of which can be viewed on the RCAHMS website.² The project is most impressive in its extent and has thus far included archaeology, history, geography, ecclesiastical evidence, environmental evidence including soil analysis from the sites, and linguistic and place-name evidence. In her introduction to the website, Barbara Crawford says that ‘the purpose of this part of the project has been to provide what evidence there is as a basis for future research’ and to make some ‘preparatory comments’. The really exciting aspect of this project lies in Crawford’s vision of an extensive multi-disciplinary study which can reveal so much more than the single-discipline investigation. The latter is, of course, valuable but much more limited in scope and, occasionally, blinkered by the narrowly subject-defined parameters set. The multi-disciplinary approach is one which Barbara Crawford had already adopted in the research programme of excavation at the Biggings (HU1760), Papa Stour, where she found that ‘it is very important that we (that is specialists in various disciplines) learn to talk each other’s language, and appreciate the various contributions to our better understanding of the past, which—particularly for historians of the medieval north who have very few written records to study—can lead to fuller illumination of past society’ (Crawford 2002, 15).

The aim of this paper is to add some more evidence from the field of place-name studies and to consider Papa Stour (HU1660), Shetland, in the context of the neighbouring islands of Vementry (HU2960), Papa

¹ ON *papi* m., *papar* (pl.) priest(s) or monk(s), described in the *Dictionary of the Old Norse Language* as ‘...Christian men, and men who devoted their time to contemplation...’ (‘...menn kristnir, ok hyggja menn...’) (Fritzner 1954, 929) and in the later supplementary edition as ‘den førnorske befolkning på Island og de nordskotske øyene’ or ‘the pre-Norse inhabitants of Iceland and the northern islands of Scotland’ (Fritzner 1972, 274).

² <http://www.rcahms.gov.ac.uk/papar>

Little (HU3360) and Muckle Roe (HU3466), all of which lie close to the mainland of Shetland on the south side of the deep indentation known as St Magnus Bay (HU2170) (Illus. 47).³ Mention will also be made of Little Roe (HU4079) which lies at the mouth of Sullom Voe (HU3775) and which seems to pair toponymically with Muckle Roe in much the same way that Papa Little pairs with Papa Stour, but note that the order of elements in these compounds differs, at least in their modern forms. It should also be noted that most Shetlanders from the Westside of Shetland where I spent my childhood in the 1950s and where Papa is located, would not regularly have used the full description, Papa Stour or 'large island of the priests'. Reference was to Papa and everyone understood that to mean the island recorded on the map as Papa Stour. It is interesting, therefore, to observe that the very first mention of the island is also in the form *Papey* in the 1299 document (Ballantyne and Smith 1999, 1) which was given prominence by Barbara Crawford in 1999 when she organised a conference to commemorate the 700th anniversary of this, Shetland's first document (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, Preface). The form *Papa Sthora* is first recorded in Vendos (Windhouse, Yell, Shetland) in 1452 in a document written in Middle Norwegian, the printed texts of which are described as containing 'major errors' (Ballantyne and Smith 1999, 16–17). The form *Papa Meikill* does very occasionally occur as, for example, in a document produced in Edinburgh, dated 1615, which is of great interest to place-name scholars because it records a particularly large number of place-names from all parts of Shetland including 'the isle of *Papa Meikill* and lands of the same' and 'the isles of *Vehemendrie* and *Papa Litill*' (NAS, RH7/15 (1615/1). More reference will be made to this useful source later.

The islands of Muckle Roe and Little Roe display the same large/small partnership, with Muckle Roe being the large red island, with reference to the red sandstone rock of the island, and Little Roe its smaller equivalent which lies, as noted above, at the entrance from Yell Sound (HU4192) into Sullom Voe. The two isthmuses of Mavis Grind (HU3468) and Brae (HU3667), located at the inner end of Sullom Voe,

³ The place-names and four-figure references have been extracted from Robin A. Hooker's *Pathfinder Gazetteer of Scotland* which, as the instructions accompanying the database say, was 'compiled so as to be a natural companion to the Ordnance Survey Pathfinder (1:25 000 scale) map series.

allow easy and safe access to the south and west,⁴ with Papa Little lying in a pivotal position in the mouth of Aith Voe (HU3458), just as Little Roe lies in the mouth of Sullom Voe. Papa Little would have been a good place to land, or by which to navigate, before turning west to Vementry and, ultimately, to Papa Stour which is separated from the extremity of the western land mass by the Sound of Papa (HU1858) and which has a commanding view of approaches by sea from all points of the compass.

Muckle Roe (**rauðøy mikla*) is recorded on Timothy Pont's map of Shetland in the form '*Ru Oy stour*' (Blaeu 1654)—perhaps influenced towards this form by the name Papa Stour—but Little Roe is not depicted. The latter is, of course, a very much smaller island in land extent. The islands of *Papa Stour*, *Papa Little* and *Vemindru* are also shown on Pont's map. Only Papa Stour shows some internal place-names on this map and these are *Hana Vø*, *Midgairth*, *Goird*, *Housa* and *Papa Sound*. Only Papa Stour has symbols on it indicating church sites. The other islands are devoid of symbols. In 1654, at least, Papa was seen to be the island most deserving of the cartographer's attention to detail or, possibly, more was known about it by the person(s) who provided the information.

Muckle Roe, as its name suggests, is quite a large island and its bulk provides considerable shelter for the land crossings at Mavis Grind and Brae and for the Busta (HU3466) estate on the neighbouring mainland,⁵ just as Papa Stour must give shelter to Sandness (HU1857) when the wind is from the north-west, a common direction in Shetland. Muckle

⁴ I am currently investigating *eið*-names in all the North Atlantic islands, believing that they provide us with a clear indication of the transport and communication routes used by the Vikings, the Norse settlers and their descendants. This is work in progress but I have published one short paper in *The New Shetlander*, *Simmer Issue* 2005 in which both Mavis Grind from **maef-eiðs grind* 'gate of the narrow isthmus' and Brae from **breið-eið* 'broad isthmus' are mentioned (Waugh 2005a, 35). See also (Jakobsen 1993, 36–7). There is also recent evidence of the use of Mavis Grind as a crossing place by people 'flitting' from Papa Stour to Yell carrying all their worldly goods in two sixerns or six-oared boats which were unloaded at Mavis Grind and then loaded again once the boats had been carried across (SA, D9/114/3).

⁵ Jakobsen suggests that Busta in Brae does not belong to the *bólstaðr* group covered by Peder Gammeltoft (2001) because 'in an old deed (list of taxes of 1600) it is found written 'Byrstada' and must then be an old 'býjarstaðir' from ON *bær* (*býr*) m. farm' (Jakobsen 1993, 27). It is nevertheless worth noting that there is also a farm called Bousta (HU2257), also now pronounced ['bustə], which is part of the Sandness estate, located on the mainland opposite Papa Stour and which could derive from either ON *bólstaðr* m. or ON *bústaðr* m. farm (see also Gammeltoft 2001, 98). Whether these quasi-parallels are significant or not is difficult to determine.

Roe appears in the above-mentioned 1615 document as *Row* in 'the isles of *Row* and *Gonfuird*... in the parish of *Delting*' (NAS, RH7/15 (1615/1)).⁶ It is also recorded as *Row* in a document dated 1612 at which point it belonged to Earl Patrick Stewart: 'The yle of Row, pertaining to my lord, not rentallit, in Andro Gifhartis possessioun, and payis nothing for it' (NAS, E41/7). Like Papa, Muckle Roe affords more fertile land and more sheltered locations on its eastern side. It is divided from the mainland by a stretch of water known as Roe Sound (HU 3366), from ON *sund* n. 'a sound, strait, narrow passage or channel' several examples of which have already been mentioned. It is very tempting to suggest that the lost *þing*-site⁷ or parliament site, *Rauðarþing* (Ballantyne and Smith 1999, 4),⁸ might have been somewhere close by, near the crossing points at Mavis Grind and Brae and near the island called **rauðøyr mikla*.

Vementry (**Vémundar-øyr*), alone among these five islands, has a Norse personal-name specific, the man's name *Vémundr* (Lind 1931, 806) which, incidentally, is one of the names carved in runes in the chambered tomb of Maeshowe in Orkney (Barnes 1994, 79), although there is no way of telling whether the Maeshowe carver and the Vementry coloniser are one and the same. Norse personal-name specifics are not unusual in Shetland island names and my perception is that the isles so named are generally places which could have been used to provide good and secure grazing for the animals of the eponymous owner or occupier who may not necessarily have lived on the island, although that perception may be coloured by developments in post-medieval centuries. The earliest mention of the island in Shetland documents is in a tack of lands in Strom and the isle of Vementry dated 1577 where the form is 'the ile of *Vehementrie*' (Ballantyne and Smith 1999, 228–29). The document was, however, recorded in Linlithgow on behalf of Lord Robert Stewart and it does not necessarily prove that local Shetland people no longer understood that **Vémundar-øyr* already included the Norse word for an island. They clearly had a dense dialect which, reading between the lines, could be used to the discomfiture of the minister of

⁶ It is more likely that the reference is to Muckle Roe rather than Little Roe, because of their relative geographical positions vis-à-vis Gofnir (HU3761).

⁷ For a full discussion of *þing*-names see Fellows-Jensen 1996a, 16–29.

⁸ Jakobsen says that '*Raudarthing* seems to denote the north part of Northmavine (Mainland), which formerly must have been called **Rø* as the northernmost part of it is called 'North Roe' (Jakobsen 1993, 126), but it could equally be argued that Muckle Roe marks its southern extent.

the parish who was recording information for *The Statistical Account of Shetland* at the end of the eighteenth century (1791–99): ‘The language spoke (*sic*) is a mixture of Norwegian, Dutch, and English; but all the inhabitants now understand pure English, though they could speak among themselves so as an Englishman could not understand them’ (Reid-Tait 1925, 61).

The fortuitous survival of the 1299 document relating to Papa Stour has given the island added prominence in recent historical research and archaeological investigation. The publication by Barbara Crawford and Beverley Ballin Smith of *The Biggings, Papa Stour, Shetland* was an important landmark in such research in Shetland and the chapter entitled ‘Papa Stour in History’ includes a very brief comment on place-name evidence from Papa Stour. Crawford asks ‘How do these names fit into the pattern of settlement on this intensely-settled island?’ and concludes that ‘We will probably never know’ (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 29). Unfortunately there is much truth in her conclusion, although Brian Smith’s discussion of the 1299 document makes an important contribution to our understanding of what the situation might have been (Smith 2002, 37–43). It is not my present purpose to attempt to offer any further illumination of past patterns of settlement through examination of place-names, because the evidence available from habitative place-names is very scanty and the attempt would be likely to fail. I shall leave settlement patterns and fiscal matters to the historians and look instead at the broader patterns which can be discerned across centuries of naming in the five islands surveyed here, to see what similarities and differences there are in the nature of the names which have survived to the present day.

A twentieth-century collection of the place-names of Papa Stour itself was undertaken by a Shetlander and former resident of Papa, George P. S. Peterson, and the results of his survey of the coastal place-names of the island have been published in booklet form (Peterson 1993). The value of this booklet is to be measured in terms of the local knowledge which it contains and preserves, because there can be little doubt that without the efforts of George Peterson many of the names and their associations would have been lost. His knowledge of the recent history and folklore of the island is immense and the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in particular come alive through his words. He disarms criticism by concluding with the following statement: ‘I readily accept that some of the origins which I state to be Celtic, may in fact be Old Norse, for I lay no claim to being an authority on the subject’ (Peterson

1993, 72). Presumably someone before me has baulked at the idea of so much Celtic survival in Papa Stour. If as many place-names as Peterson suggests were attributable to Celtic origin it would indeed be significant in view of the eponymous Celtic priests who, through the medium of the Norse language, left their mark on the nomenclature of this and other islands in the North Atlantic. However, there seems little clear justification for the suggestions made, and alternative Norse or Scots derivations are generally possible although difficult to substantiate when early references are lacking, as is the case for the majority of minor coastal features. The following examples will illustrate alternative possibilities for two of the place-names for which Peterson has suggested Celtic origin:

Mo Gio (Peterson 1993, 9): the specific *Mo* could derive from ON *mór* m. 'a moor or heath', which appears frequently in adjectival position in place-names and which can indicate either the reddish-brown colour of the vegetation or, in the case of water as here, the fact that there is a soft, sandy bottom which may be exposed at low tide.

Black Tarrie Geo/Red Tarrie Geo (Peterson 1993, 38): the specific *Tarrie* is certainly from ON *þari* m. seaweed. This element is common in Shetland place-names.

For some names, however, there can be little certainty and Jakob Jakobsen was inclined towards Celtic origin at times but he generally qualified his suggestions with words such as 'probably' in cases of doubt (for example, when suggesting a derivation for the element *sk(j)or*, *sk(j)ord* etc. he notes that the 'names probably spring from Celtic *sgor*, *sgur*, *sguir*, *scuir*, in Gaelic = rock, peak' (Jakobsen 1993 reprint, 204) rather than from an Old Norse source. The likelihood is that the possible Old Norse sources which he lists such as '*skarð*, *sker* and *skör*' were themselves loanwords into Gaelic from Old Norse which gave rise to the Gaelic forms noted above and then we have to tease out an impossibly complicated chicken-and-egg situation before arriving at the most probable local conclusion, which is that a name such as Skjurdins in Papa Stour (Peterson 1993, 58) developed in Shetland from an Old Norse original denoting some form of natural rocky feature and preserving the Shetland form *-ins* of the Old Norse definite ending, which commonly occurs in many place-names of Norse origin which have been preserved through the medium of Scots or Scottish English in the Northern Isles.

Finally, a name such as Gio o Kreed (Peterson 1993, 49) in the later English formation ‘Gio of X’⁹ is no proof of the Celtic origin of the generic Kreed in a Shetland context. Jakobsen suggests derivation from ‘Irish cruit, a hump on the back, roundish hill’ (Jakobsen 1993 reprint, 198) which may, or may not, be correct but the whole name could be an import from mainland Scotland in relatively recent times. There is no way of telling what the origin really is, but the fact that Peterson says ‘In Papa, however, the word has left the knowe—which may be the little eminence on Unglabriad Head—and is now applied to the coastline’ (Peterson, 1993, 49) allows room for doubt to creep in. Names can, of course, be transferred from one landscape feature to another by succeeding generations of name-users but when interpretation of the generic is dependent upon an assumption that such movement may have taken place in the past, it is rather questionable. My belief is that none of the place-names in the islands surveyed here can be said to offer reliable evidence of Celtic origin, whether pre- or post- the arrival of the Scandinavian settlers from Norway.

Collection of those present place-names from the Pathfinder maps which can be said to refer to settlement on the five islands in the study group produces the following results.¹⁰ Papa Stour has six names which are identified as settlement, Muckle Roe has 23 such names, and none of the other three islands has any name indicating settlement or habitation at all.¹¹ The names marked as settlement on the Pathfinder maps of Papa Stour and Muckle Roe are as follows:

Papa Stour

Bragasetter (HU1759)

Hurdiback (HU1760)

Biggings (HU1760)

⁹ See Nicolaisen’s suggestion ‘that the ‘A of B’ pattern came to Shetland (and Orkney) as a ready-made name-type from Scotland with Scots-speaking incomers from the north-east mainland’ (Nicolaisen 1983, 78). Also see Sandnes 1999, 23–34 and Sandnes 2005, 173–180.

¹⁰ As elsewhere in this paper, in the interests both of convenience and uniformity of comparison, these settlement-names have been extracted from Robin Hooker’s Gazetteer based on maps in the Pathfinder Series of Great Britain. Hooker uses the simple method of identifying settlement names with the letter S, relief with the letter R, and water with W. Earlier maps or other written sources do record some additional names which will be mentioned later in the paper.

¹¹ There is an inhabited house called Vementry (HU3059) but it is located on the mainland opposite the island.

Mid Setter (HU1760)
 North House (HU1860)
 Gardie (HU1860)

Muckle Roe

Burg (HU2965)
 Sandhill (HU3065)
 Hillside (HU3262)
 Little-Ayre (HU3262)
 Gillarona (HU3262)
 Littleburn (HU3263)
 South House (HU3263)
 Cumle (HU3263)
 Knowe (HU3363)
 Ayredale (HU3363)
 South Town (HU3363)
 Grind (HU3364)
 Backafeld (HU3365)
 Glen (HU3365)
 Roesound (HU3365)
 Hevdawick (HU3365)
 Burn (HU3366)
 Northscord (HU3366)
 Scarfataing (HU3463)
 Greentaing (HU3464)
 Heights (HU3465)
 Southpund (HU3465)
 Lee (HU3465)

Apart from the immediately obvious fact that more settlement-names are recorded for Muckle Roe than for Papa Stour on the 1977 Pathfinder maps of the two islands, there are other interesting points of comparison. In particular, it is noteworthy that—with the possible exception of the present Scots form of the name Biggings, although Biggings too almost certainly has a Norse antecedent as Crawford has pointed out (Crawford and Ballin Smith 1999, 28; Crawford 1985, 136)—all of Papa Stour's settlement names are modern reflexes of older Norse names, whereas many of the settlement names on Muckle Roe, such as Little Burn, Knowe, Glen, Burn and Heights, and most probably some of the other names listed as well such as Sandhill, Hillside and Southpund, are of Scots or English origin, or could have created by

Shetland dialect speakers rather than Norn speakers, as in the cases of Little-Ayre, Ayredale, Grind, Backafeld, Roesound, Northscord, Scarfataing, Green Taing and Lee. Some place-names on Muckle Roe could, of course, have started life as topographical descriptions which could have been created by either Norn speakers or Shetland dialect speakers before being adopted for use as descriptors of settlement: Burg, Gillarona, Cumle and Hevdawick are possible examples. We can deduce from all of this that creation of new croft- or smallholding-names took place in Muckle Roe at a much later date than in Papa and that the strand of earlier Norse habitative place-names did not exist on Muckle Roe.

Settlement in both Papa Stour and Muckle Roe is now concentrated on their sheltered and more accessible eastern sides where they are closest to the mainland, as well as being where much of the land suitable for agriculture is located but, unlike Papa, there is no clear place-name evidence of permanent settlement on Muckle Roe prior to the seventeenth century. George Low, whose 1774 tour of Orkney and Shetland was eventually published in 1879, makes reference to both Papa Stour and Muckle Roe. His comments on Muckle Roe point to settlement on the east of the island by that date but, otherwise, focus on the abundance of wildlife and its economic potential: 'an island about four miles long and as many broad; inhabited by 13 families, who are placed on the E. and N.E. sides. The west side very bare rocks, oddly cut into numerous loops and caverns, which give it a most barbarous appearance; but afford shelter for a great number of Seals and Otters, the skins of the latter being a valuable mercantile commodity' (Low 1879, 129). Of the eastern side of Papa Stour he says, 'Landed in House-voe, a small open bay, surrounded on all sides with fine Corn-fields, this being the most beautiful of the lesser Schetland Isles. The cultivated part indeed is a charming spot, abounding in Corn and Grass, the soil in general sandy' but the west side of Papa Stour, 'the uncultivated part, thin and bare, scarce even affording pasture for sheep, and but little firing' (Low 1879, 123).

Perhaps the lack of peat for fuel on Papa was a deterrent to intensification of settlement in more recent centuries, but it did not deter early settlement on the island, whereas it would seem that the opposite chronology applies in Muckle Roe where there is much later settlement which has only intensified in the latter years of the twentieth century and no clear evidence of any settlement at all in the early Norse period. *The Statistical Account*, dated 1791–99, in fact suggests that settlement of

the islands on the coast of the parish of Delting is very recent: 'Mickle Rhoe...containing 14 families, who live on a few spots which have been brought under cultivation within these 40 or 50 years: These lie along the sea coast. The other parts of the island are covered with a kind of heath, which affords no bad pasturage for sheep, horned cattle and horses; of all which a great number might be reared with a small degree of attention. This island lies on the south coast of the parish' (Reid Tait 1925, 5).¹² It can be confidently argued that the older Norse names had a much firmer grip in Papa because of the earlier importance of the place, which would have ensured that its place-names were common currency and were, consequently, remembered in subsequent centuries.

To digress for a moment on the subject of lack of peat on Papa Stour, George Peterson notes that, in order to augment their supplies, 'each household cut and cured (peat) on places like Papa Little, Aithsness (HU3258), and West Burrafirth (HU2657)' (Peterson 1993, 66) which draws attention again to the possibility of regular movement of people along the coast from Papa Stour to Papa Little in the east. It also draws my attention to the headland called Braganess (HU3160), which is the tip of the Aithsness peninsula jutting into the sea between Vementry and Papa Little. Could there have been a centuries-long connection in terms of land use such as peat cutting or cattle grazing,¹³ between the Braganess which is located directly opposite Papa Little and the small farm of Bragasetter on Papa Stour or is that taking orthographic coincidence too far? To the best of my knowledge, all other Shetland instances of the Old Norse element *brekka* f., which, thanks to the form recorded in the 1299 document, can be identified as the specific in these two names, are now spelled Breck-/ Brek- / Brekk-, and the only two exceptions are Bragasetter and Braganess. The 1299 document records a dispute over the rent of the small farm of *Brekasetr* as follows, and note that the two witnesses present were themselves land-owning farmers or householders from Aith (*Eið*) and Burrafirth (*Borgarffjörðr*), which again highlights the regular connections which evidently existed among inhabitants along the coast:

¹² The island of Little Roe is also mentioned very briefly in the same extract, along with other small islands: 'On the north end (of the parish of Delting) are the islands of Little Rhoe, containing 2 families; Brother Isle, 2 families; Fishholm, 1 family' (Reid-Tait 1925, 5).

¹³ George Low says rather dismissively 'On the S. East side of Roe lies Papa Little, remarkable for nothing but good Cattle pasture' (Low 1879, 129).

... They bore so witness, Ívarr the *bóndi* at Eið and Haralldr in Borgarfjörðr, that they were [present] at it in the *stofa* on the duke's farm in Papey the Monday in Passion-Week, when Ragnhilldr declared that Brekasætr was not in rent with the *skatt*-land up in [the] house, and that the duke ought to take full rent although Brekasætr were not included.¹⁴

The name Biggin(g)s, mentioned above, is the name of the township at the heart of which the Papa Stour excavations took place. In its present form this name orthographically mimics the Scots word *biggin(s)* which is recorded in *DOST* from 1828 onwards in the collective sense of 'a cluster of houses or hamlet'.¹⁵ Jakobsen likewise describes *biggin* as 'a collection or cluster of houses' and derives '*bygging, from bygga, vb., *to build*' (Jakobsen 1985 I, 40), as does *DOST*, which also mentions that the word is recorded circa 1250 in Middle English in the sense 'a building, edifice', and this singular version of the word also appears in place-names such as Scottish *Newbigginghe* in the twelfth century. It has a long pedigree but is this really the origin of the name Biggings in Shetland? John Stewart argues otherwise (Stewart 1961, 256) and the more I reflect upon it the more probable it seems that he is correct in his assumption that the ultimate source is in fact ON *byggð* f., a related word which has a range of meanings from 'colonisation and establishment of abode' to 'inhabited land' in the very specific sense of 'the dwellings and the whole cultivated neighbourhood' (Cleasby *et al.* 1982 edn., 89). The *-ins* -ending which this word has acquired is very typical of Shetland-Norse place-name construction as has already been noted with reference to Skjurdins earlier in this chapter. I have discussed this type of ending elsewhere and wrote then that 'I think it is true to say that when a place-name has an ending *-ans*, *-ens*, *-ins* in Shetland, the generic in the name is no longer current in the lexicon and the place-name element is like a fly preserved in the amber of its (Old Norse) definite plural ending with added English plural *-s*' (Waugh forthcoming).

I am further reminded of the comment made by an informant from Twatt, also on the Westside of Shetland, to her son who was recording her comments on my behalf, that 'Lower Longaskule was the original kernel of Twatt and there was "a biggins" there from which most of the existing houses of Twatt (but not Kirkhouse) were "set oot" at some

¹⁴ This is taken from Paul Bibire's translation of the 1299 document published at the start of Crawford 2002, 9–11.

¹⁵ See www.dsl.ac.uk.

earlier time' (Waugh 2005b, 234). The Biggings in Papa Stour can also lay claim to being 'the kernel' of the settlement there but if another habitative place-name, such as Longaskule (long hall or dwelling) in Twatt, preceded it, it has not survived.

Also like Twatt, Papa Stour has an instance of the name North House (sometimes Northhouse or Northhoose) and, in this context, I should draw attention to additional Papa Stour names mentioned by Brian Smith in his short introductory comment entitled 'The 1299 Letter about Papa Stour: a note' and to the explanation given by Smith that:

Around 1650 the arable land in Papa was divided into two territories: (1) the ancient settlement at Da Biggins, around Hoosa Voe, and (2) a ribbon of much smaller settlements further west, next to the pasture land, with names mainly ending in '-ster' and '-gert' (...usually denoting (marginal) farms or pasture): Bragaster, Mid Setter, Setter, Olligert, Hurdaback and Evrigert. Da Biggins was divided into three large 'rooms', Uphoose, Northhoose and Sudderhoose. These rooms comprised three 'lasts of land', each, land units peculiar to Shetland which paid 144 pennies in rent, a Shetland mark. In other words, we have an ancient core of arable land comprising nine lasts of land, and six half-lasts of arable on the periphery: three-quarters and one-quarter of the whole respectively (Smith 2002, 39).¹⁶

Several of these names are not recorded on the OS Pathfinder map, which is limited in its coverage, but all are of Norse origin and suggest, as Smith says, 'ancient' settlement on the island and intensive use of its land resources in the past. One of the names listed by Smith is Sudderhoose which has an apparent toponymic parallel in the name South House (HU3263) in Muckle Roe, but appearances can deceive and the South House in Muckle Roe is just that—a house which either lies to the south of some other fixed point in the settlement landscape or more probably, given its location, which is facing south. There is a neighbouring South Town to which the same comment could apply. There is no toponymic evidence of earlier territorial divisions in Muckle Roe.

The conclusion, from this brief overview of place-names on islands around St Magnus Bay, has to be that place-name evidence indicates that the settlement history of Papa Stour was very different from that of other neighbouring islands. What the wider implications of this might

¹⁶ See also Smith 2000, 1–18.

be is a question which can only be addressed by undertaking similar investigations of the immediate environment of all locations which have the element *papar* in their place-nomenclature. There are many other questions which may never be answered. Did the presence of the priests encourage early Norse settlement of these islands which led, naturally, to creation of early Norse names? Were the priests immediately replaced by the incoming Norse settlers¹⁷ or were they tolerated as servants of the incomers on condition that they would continue producing crops for themselves and the Norse settlers on the island and on the neighbouring mainland? What happened to their language? We reach the same vexed question about the toponymic silence of the pre-Norse inhabitants. Memory of them is only preserved for posterity because the Norse chose to refer to them in their naming of places across the North Atlantic.¹⁸ As far as the Northern Isles are concerned, I would agree with Gammeltoft's argument that 'it must be assumed that the *Pap*-place-names... signal direct contact between the Scandinavians and *Papar*' (Gammeltoft 2004, 45), although the same does not necessarily apply automatically to similar place-names in Iceland and the Faroes, of which Fellows-Jensen has argued that they may not have resulted from 'contact between the first Viking settlers and Irish anchorites but (be) the result of the transfer of place-names from the Viking colonies in Northern and Western Isles' (Fellows-Jensen 1996b, 117). Both are possible.

There are no definitive answers to be had from place-name studies. The only thing that can be said definitively is that the Norse recognised the presence of the *papar* in their naming of their new Atlantic territories. Common sense and pragmatism suggest that for names such as Papa Stour—the *Papey* of the 1299 document—to have been created and to have survived throughout ensuing centuries of population and language change, some of these *papar* or Irish priests must have remained

¹⁷ Fellows-Jensen makes the comment, when discussing the *papar* in Iceland, that abandonment of sites by the priests must have been likely, at least for a time 'although perhaps not permanently', because although 'hermits would have selected these remote sites to enable them to live far from the trials and temptations of the world,... the sites were probably not remote enough to protect the hermits from the fury of the Northmen' (Fellows-Jensen 1996b, 116).

¹⁸ As Aidan MacDonald has pointed out: 'These place-names are linguistically Old Norse and so coined by speakers of Old Norse.... The names reflect directly the interests and, possibly, activities of Norsemen; and only indirectly the activities of insular Celtic ecclesiastics' (MacDonald 2002, 21).

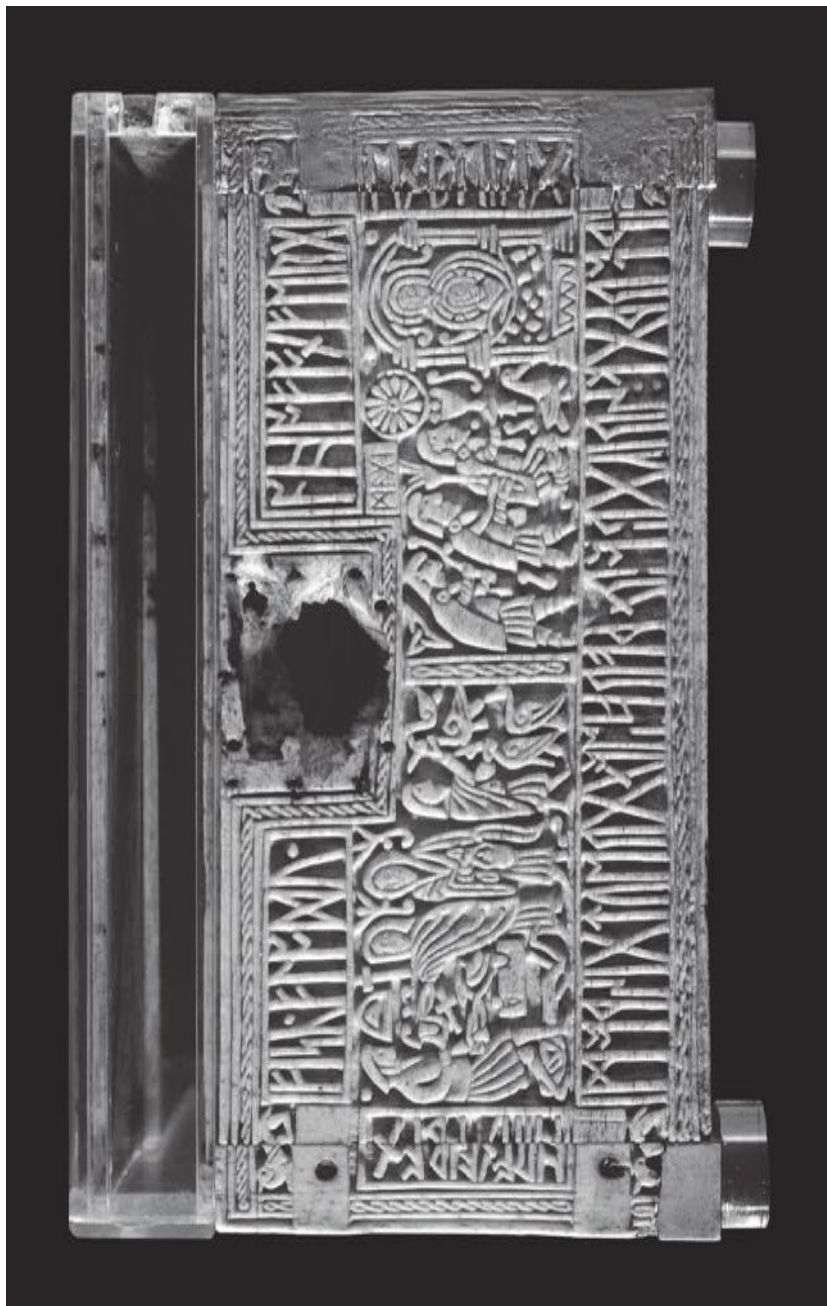
alive and *in situ* during the early period of Norse settlement in Shetland. At least, they must have been there for long enough to draw the close attention of the incoming Scandinavian settlers to the priests and their practices, whether religious, cultural or agrarian, and for that period of interested observation to result in the borrowing of the word *papi* m. (*papar* pl.) into the Old Norse lexicon and onomasticon.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Illus. 4. Auzon casket. (© Copyright The Trustees of The British Museum)



Illus. 32. Halliara Kirk, Fetlar and plantiecrub from the south-west. (Photograph: Morris and Brady).



Illus. 34. Grimister Chapel site, Yell. (Photograph: Morris and Brady).



Illus. 35. Location of Nor Wick bay and the modern settlement of Norwick with its enclosed chapel and graveyard (centre-right). Photographed looking south. (Photograph: B. Ballin Smith).



Illus. 36. The section across the Norwick site with the Iron Age material within it (Photograph: Les Smith).

[BALLIN SMITH]



Illus. 37. The Viking occupation at Norwick during excavation
(Photograph: Les Smith).

[CURTIS]



Illus. 38. The base of the stone at Hilton of Cadbol during excavation
(Photograph: S. Jeffrey).



Illus. 41. The St. Serf's arrowhead. (Photograph reproduced courtesy of Perth Museum and Art Gallery, Perth & Kinross Council, Scotland).



Illus. 42. The Portmoak cross-slab as displayed in the new Portmoak parish church. (Photograph reproduced courtesy of Tom Gray).



Illus. 43. Both sides of the mould for making pilgrim badges found at Kinross. (Photograph reproduced courtesy of the Trustees of National Museums of Scotland).



Illus. 45. Deep anthropogenic topsoil under modern pasture on the outskirts of Nairn. (Photograph: J. McKenzie)



Illus. 46. Seaweed spread as fertilizer on a modern-day Tiree farm, 2003.
(Photograph: J. McKenzie)



Illus. 48. The east side of Bressay, looking south. Stobister is in the centre-left near the coast. (Photograph: B.Smith)



Illus. 49. The Stobister house. (Photograph: B.Smith)



Illus. 50. Sinnabist, looking west, with the island of Havera in the background. (Photograph: B.Smith)



Illus. 51. The house at Sinnabist, looking south. (Photograph: B.Smith)



Illus. 52. The remains of the house and enclosure at Starrapund. (Photograph: B.Smith)



Illus. 53. Starrapund, on the edge of the loch, with its dyke in the foreground, looking south. (Photograph: B. Smith)



Illus. 54. Carl Christian Rafn (1785-1864) was deeply rooted in the Scandinavian past. In relation to his lifelong work for the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries he was also one of the dynamic forces behind the establishment of the National Library of the Faroe Islands (Føroya Landsbókasavn). (Photograph: after Jensen and Jensen 1988).

Illus. 55. Christian Pløyen (1803-67) was born in Copenhagen. He graduated in Law from University of Copenhagen in 1826. In 1830 he was appointed bailiff (Danish landsfoged) and from 1837 and until 1848 Amtmand and Kommandant of the Faroe Islands. In 1840, he joined the commission, which two years later proposed the abolition of the trade monopoly on Faroe. In 1848, he was appointed by the King to represent the Faroe Islands in the Assembly of the Estates of the Realm, and the same year he became a member of the constitutional assembly. Pløyen was highly respected and well-liked among the people of the Faroe Islands. He spoke Faroese as well as any native and was a common guest at weddings and other parties among the ordinary people. On such occasions he was a dedicated participant in Faroese singing and dancing. He is the author of the very popular Ballad of the Pilot Whale (1831). (Photograph: Føroya Fornminnisavn).





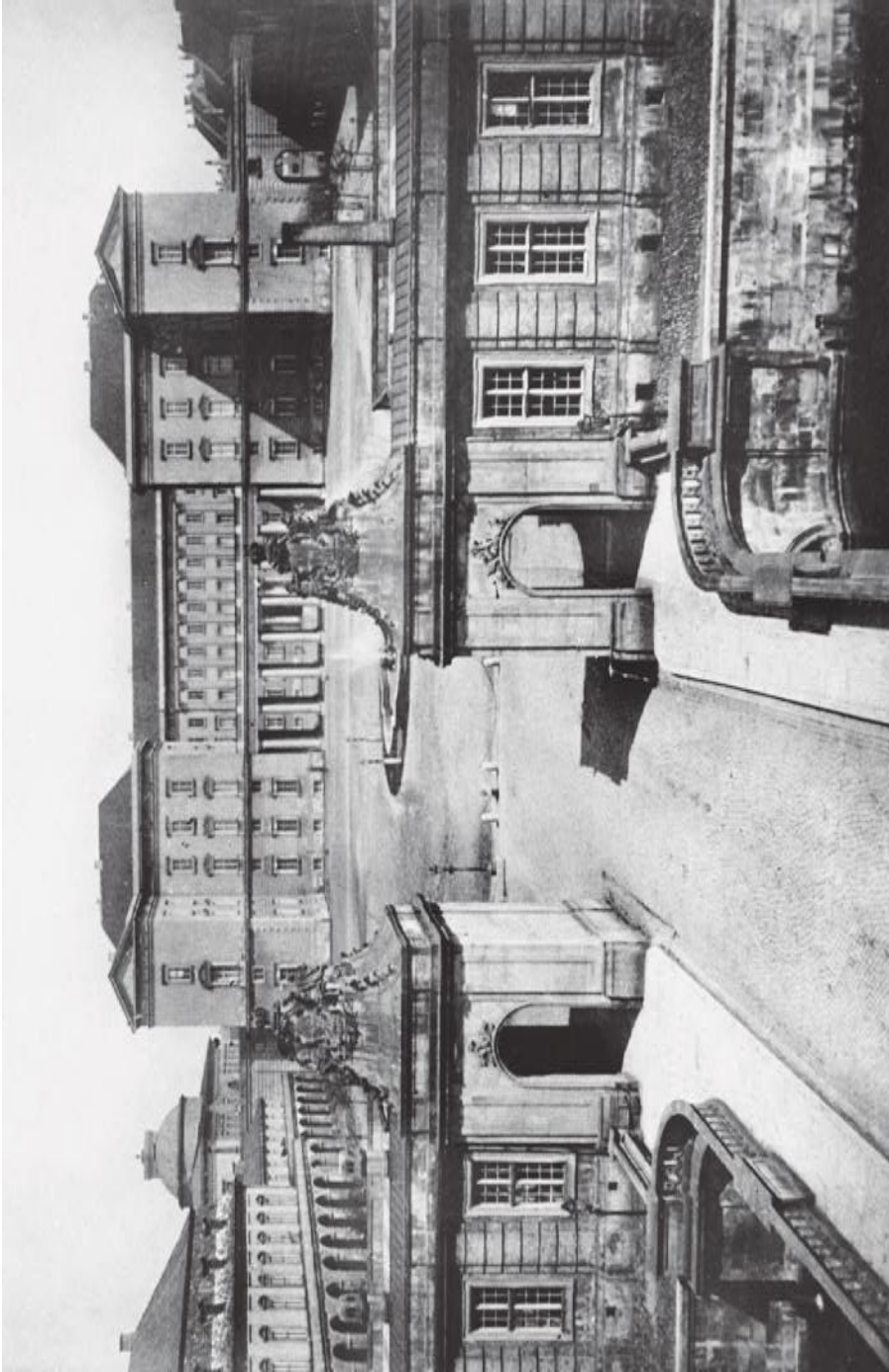
Illus. 56. Polished Neolithic 'battle-axe' stored in the National Museum of Denmark (7394). See Appendix, item (1).
(Photograph: S. Stummann Hansen.)



Illus. 57. Fragment of ninth-century Viking comb presented to Pløven by William Spence of Hamar in Unst, and now stored in the National Museum of Denmark (7395). A good parallel to this comb has been found at Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Curle 1982, 58, Illus. 36, 224). (Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the National Museum of Denmark).



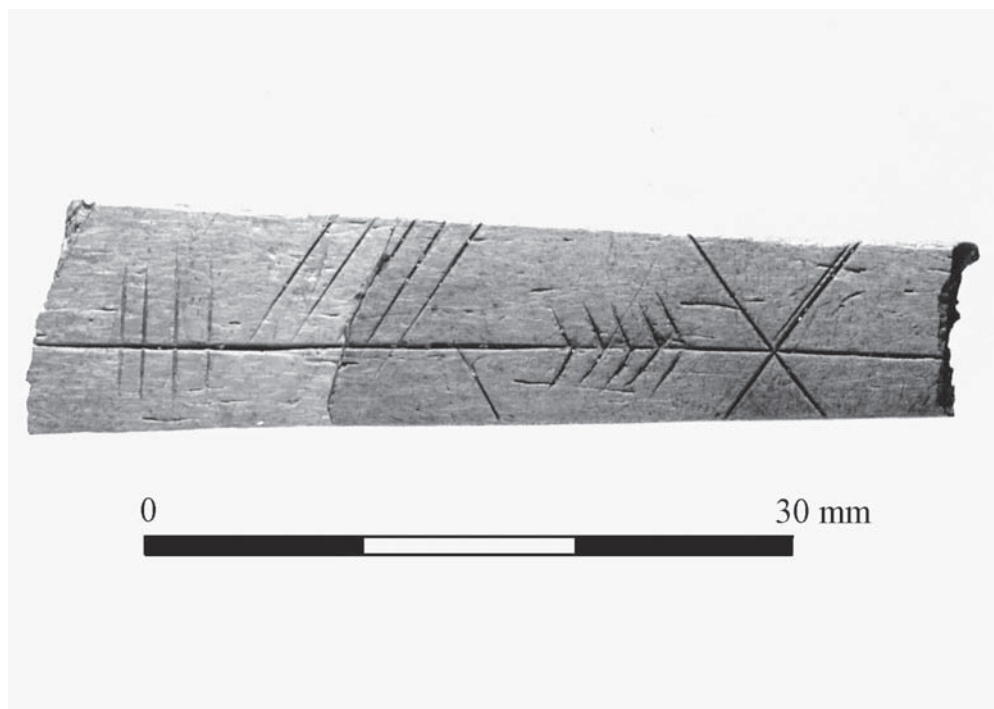
Illus. 58. Some of the 'Shetland-knives' stored in the National Museum of Denmark (5297).
See Appendix item (22). (Photograph: S. Stummann Hansen).



Illus. 59. Christiansborg Castle in Copenhagen, opposite the present-day National Museum, as it stood in the days of Pløven. On the lower floor to the left the Museum of Antiquities had its collections and exhibitions. (Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the Antiquarian-Topographical Archives, National Museum of Denmark).



Illus. 60. Rafn's traumatic death was described by Magnus Petersen (1827-1917), the prominent draftsman of the National Museum of Denmark, with these words: 'when Slesvig and the duchies had to be ceded, the old man took it so hard that he never recovered from this terrible blow but died within a few months, on 20 October 1864' (Petersen 1909, 50). Two years after his death the Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries paid its final tribute to its dynamic and visionary founder and erected a monumental gravestone at his still preserved grave in the Assistens Cemetery in Copenhagen. On the front side of the stone, Rafn's epitaph in Old Norse runic style reads: 'The Royal Society of Northern Antiquaries raised this stone in memory of its founder Carl Christian Rafn'. (Drawing: Aarbøger 1866).



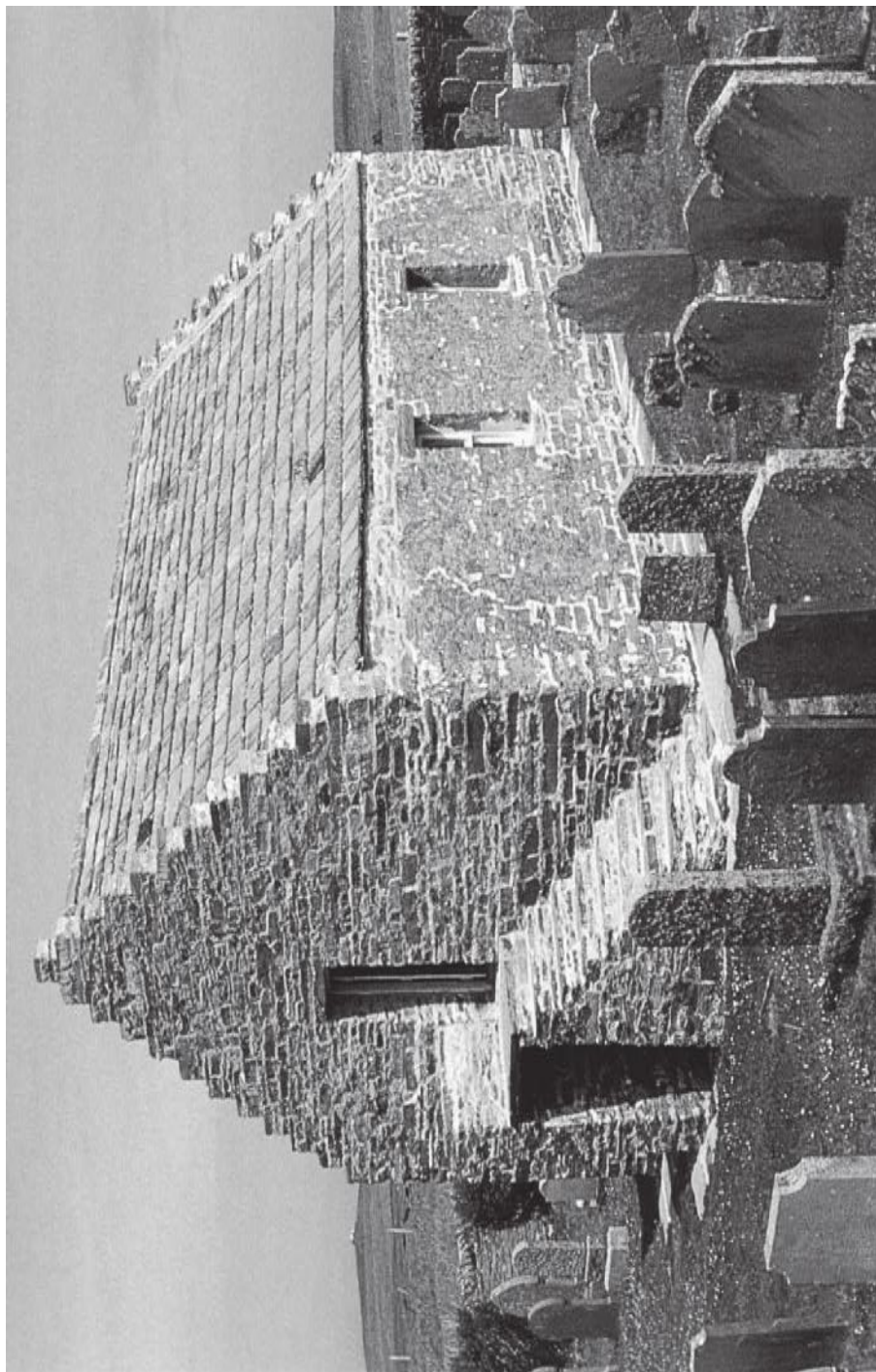
Illus. 62. Ogham-inscribed plaque from Bornais, South Uist (Photograph reproduced with kind permission of the Department of Archaeology, University of Cardiff).



Illus. 64. The Rock of the Irishmen – with Barbara Crawford.
(Photograph: S. Taylor).



Illus. 66. Aerial view of Papa Stronsay. (Photograph reproduced by kind permission of Ordnance Survey. © Crown Copyright. NC/04/24935).



Illus. 67. St Boniface Church, Papa Westray. This site epitomises the complicated identity of the Orkney *papar*. It stands on a pre-Norse ecclesiastical site which has produced cross-inscribed stones and part of a corner-post shrine. These are found in conjunction with an island with a *papar*-name, a church believed to date from the twelfth century, and what is probably an 'antiquarian dedication'. (Photograph reproduced by kind permission of Jocelyn Rendall).



Illus. 68. The Monks' Stone. This slab from Papil, West Burra, Shetland, is a compelling image of *papar* under the leadership of an abbot or bishop. These well-fed figures are not hermits but appear to have a missionary or pastoral function since they carry the scriptures in satchels to a preaching station symbolised by the cross. (Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the Shetland Museum).

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